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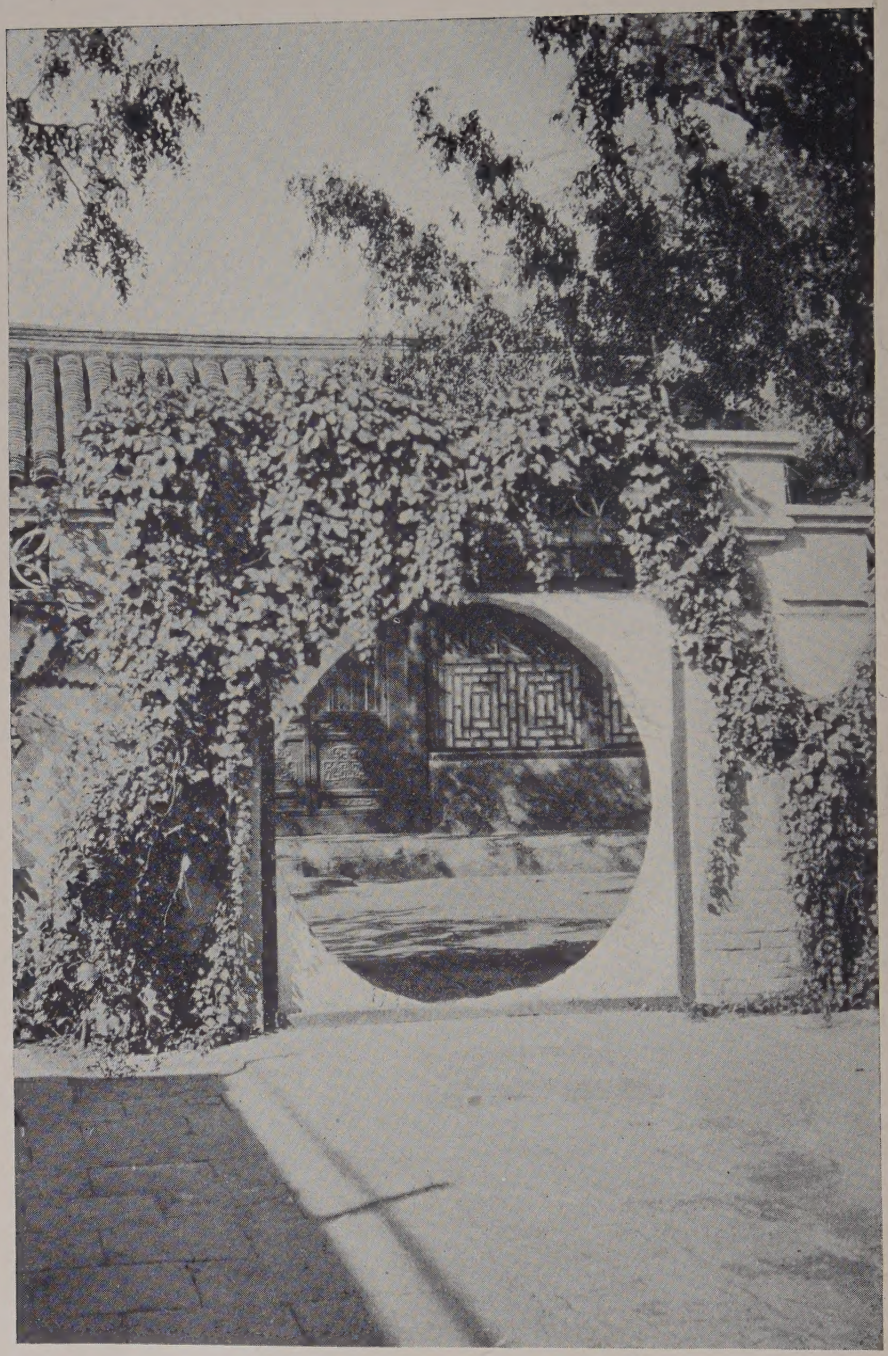
THROUGH THE MOON DOOR



THROUGH THE MOON DOOR.

[See page 11]

Through
THE MOON DOOR

The Experiences
of an American Resident
in Peking

DOROTHY GRAHAM

with photographs by the Author

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TO

My Father, Leo Graham

AND

My Husband, James W. Bennett

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THROUGH THE MOON DOOR

CHAPTER I

BEYOND THE CHINA SEA

PEKING—called Shun T'ien Fu, Obedient to Heaven, lay a thousand miles to the north. Temples of strange gods, gardens haunted by music of lacquered lutes, palaces of mellowed beauty had been created by successive emperors and encompassed by massive walls. The capital, drowsing in the sun through many centuries, had been but slightly scarred by the intrusive vandalism of the West. As Marco Polo was lured to this city by curious reports of its glory and magic, so we were enticed by travelers' tales. To Peking we started, where—as Li Tai-po has written—men called down the dreams of sunset into stone.

Along the Bund at Shanghai a thousand voices surged in raucous din. Tearing its way through incessantly shifting crowds, our motor abruptly stopped. Hands seized the luggage and propelled it

past the chow stands, up a squeaky gang-plank to a minute, jaunty steamer.

Uneasiness, wonder and then resentment vividly flared in my consciousness that we must brave the China Sea, three days of rough coast currents in such a pitiably small craft. Beside us were anchored yellow, many-decked river steamers, reputed to have cabins finished in teak, that meandered ponderously up the Yangste. I had only the consolation of knowing that they were flat-bottomed, while our boat, loaded to the plimsoll mark, certainly bulked large beneath the water line.

However, the railroads around Shanghai were torn up by an invading army. We were determined to reach Peking and this was the only means of accomplishing the journey. Dubiously I trailed my husband up the gang-plank. "Jim," I asked, "are the boats always so small?" He answered in the affirmative.

Aboard there *were* other passengers. A stout padre going back to his fold; ubiquitous French *commis voyageurs,* one with a wooden leg and very flirtatious; an Indian, accompanied by a Sikh servant, splendidly turbaned. Apparently all the Parsee colony in Shanghai had come down to speed his departure. For they crowded in the dining salon,

fanning themselves vigorously and drinking lemon-squash in his honor, not to be hurried by the gong or the Cockney warning: "Halls ashore what's goin' hashore!"

The Captain strolled along the deck, adjusting his binoculars by a strap over his shoulder.

"Mother Sills ready?" he asked abruptly. "We're in for a bad passage. Rotten luck. We have a parson aboard. Always make trouble, parsons!"

Pressed for definite information the Captain admitted that the tail of a typhoon was waiting for us outside the mouth of the Yangste River.

"Not a real typhoon," he explained emphatically. "This is a jolly good boat for escaping the 'big wind.' What could you expect? A red-headed mate. A red-headed engineer. I'd like to see any typhoon buck that combination! . . . But be sure to take a beefsteak and a bottle of ale before we reach the sea."

He mounted the steps to the bridge, sounded the bell of the indicator and a brief moment later we backed from the wharf.

The Pootung ferry scurried out of our way; a coolie, oaring a sampan downstream against the tide, tugged desperately at his *yuloh*. From a French war-

ship a snatch of the Marseillaise came to us brokenly on the river breeze.

Swiftly the panorama of the Bund glided away from us like a ribbon slipping through our fingers. The Whangpoo River turned sharply. Downstream, past Wayside Wharf, past the freighters, dry docks and foundries, we came to green meadows. An interminable, flat expanse, brilliant in the sun, were these paddies, level with the rushing river. The monotony of green was broken by an occasional straw-thatched hut, or a water buffalo grazing. Seines, the ropes tugged by coolies, lifted octopus tentacles like gigantic crabs.

Junks, in irregular procession, tacked before the wind. High-pooped galleons with tawny sails, their bows painted with eyes that they might see, seemed argosies, searching for new worlds. Others, with ribbed bamboo canvas patched from the rag market, weather worn and decaying, guided by some old man, appeared to be drifting out, seeking oblivion.

At sunset, the Whangpoo River broadened into the Yangste. A cold wind rushed from the sea. The mounting waves, yellow from Yangste silt, reflected glints of purple and blue. Golden the sky, sheer molten gold. With wide-spread sails against the

glow, the last great junk battled, making port against the rising storm gusts.

True to the Captain's prediction a typhoon lashed the sea violently. Small plants that had dotted the passageways, tripping the unwary, were herded in a bathtub where they rattled and overturned. Waves crashed on the deck, beat in at the doors. The French travelers, ensconced in a corner of the dining salon, continued to play excitable bridge, with exclamatory bidding of *carreaux* and *picques* and *sans atout,* the dummy always protesting volubly that he didn't want to be dummy and that in all justice he should have had the bid.

"Regardez-moi ça pour sans atout!" he exclaimed wrathfully as he spread out his hand. A lurch of the ship sent the cards shivering to the floor.

In the stateroom the water carafe spilled from its compartment and the burnished oil lamp tilted at a dangerous angle. To retire to the berth and cling to the railing seemed the part of wisdom. The wrenching of tortured wood, the harsh grating of the steering wheel, made sleep a precarious state. That night, through the blackness, the ship stumbled on; all the next day she crawled through waves that were devouringly near.

Wei-hai-wei was the first port of call. Coasting along the chain of ragged mountains, purple dim and misty, into waters that were cloud-shadowed, we rounded a sudden, jutting peninsula, chiseled sharply in the clarity of the sun-warmed air, and steamed into the harbor. Battleships rode at anchor, for this is a British naval station. Beyond the stretch of quiet water spread a spic and span small town, trim as the authority of Albion.

Junks, tenuously moored by the side of our vessel, received the cargo of rice flour we had brought. White with dust, coolies toiled unceasingly. There came the song of men lifting stupendous burdens, a chant of jagged, peculiar rhythm, rising to an angry swell, breaking to a falsetto solo. With each bag dumped from his shoulders, the coolie passed a stick to the counting man. The latter, having collected ten in his hand, placed them in the compartment of a stand much like an umbrella holder. Thus was the tally kept.

Our ship turned north again, in calmer waters now, perhaps because the padre had disembarked.

In the smoking room, just large enough for a green baize table and a lounge, the Indian gentleman took a perpetual series of siestas, opening occasionally a

beady eye. Barred from this haven, we found a sheltered nook on deck.

Situated aft of the cook's galley, we had an ample and quite unsought view of preparations for dinner. A chicken was brought from his wicker cage and the cook mounted to the roof of the smoking room to strangle and pluck the bird. A boy squatted on his heels, alternately cleaning carrots and rusty keys. In the iceless refrigerator, empty market baskets were piled indiscriminately with cold cuts. When I observed the cook stowing his shoes in that same convenient receptacle, I turned away—forever.

That night Cheefoo seemed a myriad of stars in a a black expanse. Constellations of the heavens, spangled lights of the water line, darting flares of the boat lanterns as silent craft came out to meet us, swift and relentless, like a fleet of innumerable Charons. Then chaos—sampans shoved each other with appalling force, tilted to the verge of capsizing in the mad rush to reach our vessel. In the steerage hundreds flung their bundles from the yet moving steamer to the bobbing small boats, and dropped in haphazard fashion after their possessions. Babes, children, women, all were handed down by the scruff of the neck, wriggling

and shrieking in protest as they piled in indiscriminate heaps.

At the same time, seething hordes of coolies, swearing, pushing, perilously clambered up to our decks. Like attacking corsairs, they mobbed the boat. Indeed these coast vessels of a few thousand tons are frequently taken over by pirates who board the ship as passengers in port. Out at sea, suddenly with a gleam of weapons they terrorize the crew, put the captain in chains and steer to some harbor of their desire. Making off with the *sycee,* the valuables of the passengers and any cargo they happen to fancy, they abandon the ship.

To-night these were peaceful invaders, men who by thousands each year leave Shantung province, barren and crowded beyond chance of livelihood, to work for sustenance in other regions. They struggled madly for place, fought with maniacal intensity to gain that which was virtually their chance for life.

Next day, the Gulf of Pechihli, placid gray and green and spaceless, spread before us like a northern twilight sea. A string of fishing vessels drifted along the horizon. A flight of ducks crossed the leaden sky. Lonely, small birds came to our decks, searching for kitchen crumbs.

The pilot we picked up brought us to Taku Bar, to wait all night until the tide was high enough to carry us over the barrier of sand, up the river to Tientsin—which is the port of Peking. Anchored by a flat, dun-colored land, we remained. Desolate mud huts crouched low against the limitless sky. Beyond, stretched salt mounds. From the village arose an acrid, penetrating odor of roasting cockles.

Up the river passed fishing junks with slightly billowed sails, moving imperceptibly like a phantom fleet. From each deck issued a thin spiral of smoke, the fire that cooked the evening meal. Men sorted the spawn of the sea, crabs, oysters and mussels of their varied catch. Women sang as they dug poles in the shallow water to hasten the progress of their boats towards home.

To the west the sky was citron and peacock, streaking the interminable, moldy gray; flaring to sudden flame; fading to ash. Then night enveloped sea and land in a heavy pall. From a shore obliterated in blackness came the shrill, sweet notes of a piping reed.

Finally—the fifth day of the voyage—we moved up the Pei-ho River. Waves from the wake of the steamer inundated gardens of vegetables in orderly

rows and willow trees leaning obliquely over small, tributary streams. *Kaoliang,* the corn of China, grew in patches. Spread on the roofs of mud houses this maize was drying a ruddy yellow. In straight, precise lines sunflowers glowed against the walls. Trotting through paths that bordered the fields, coolies carried a scarlet palanquin. Slowly we glided on, to the wharfs and the moving mass of blue figures—that was Tientsin.

We had not been quite convinced of the war on leaving Shanghai. We knew that Chang Tso-lin, the rebel of Mukden, had begun the fighting and Wu Pei-fu, Defender of Peking, champion of the government, was driven to the necessity of justifying his titles. The foreign population fed on rumors. Newspapers for the most part contented themselves with special notices of events some five to ten days back, and editorial comments that were vague and veiled. Now we were brought to a realization of the combat abruptly as we reached the Tientsin station.

"The ten-thirty train?" mused the station master. "Yesterday it got here at five in the evening. Haven't heard from it anywhere along the line to-day."

That information came after Jim had descended to

the hold of the ship; and in a whirling storm of rice flour, from an accumulation of rusty brass beds, carved furniture inlaid with vicious, mottled marble and dragon-painted jars of wine, he had extricated our seventeen pieces of baggage. With that luggage piled on an open cart we had dashed across the city at the incredible speed of agitated snails. The bedraggled Chinese policeman at the bridgehead, impressed by our impetus, held up a file of donkeys to let us through.

In the long wait that stretched through interminable morning hours and late into the afternoon, we watched the spectacle of an army mobilizing. Countless trains stood stalled in the sun, turned towards the north, carrying horses and troops. Apathetically the men stared at us. Conscripted coolies, they were, dragged from their work, forced into ill-fitting uniforms, driven to battle. Boys, twelve to fourteen, old men, toil-worn and bent, were herded together. They neither moved nor sang nor talked; but with incomparable blankness stamped on their faces they passed a cigarette, from one to another, each inhaling a puff.

In other cars, where khaki tents were already pitched, gathered the trained soldiers. They possessed gold braid, red bunting and even the petty officers had a liberal sprinkling of gold stars that a

general of any other army might have envied. Their expressions, however, were equally blank. No conviction of right, no *élan* of hope, not even the savage lust of fighting stirred them. For these were mercenaries, to be paid two dollars and a half in Mexican silver for each battle.

An engine was bumpily attached to one string of cars. Soldiers, caissons, guns tilted upwards, drooping red and white flags, horses, patient camels—Wu Pei-fu's army moved to the Great Wall at Shanhaikwan.

Presently an official train snorted into the station. A dozen soldiers tumbled out, lined up and clumsily presented arms, belatedly affixing bayonets to their guns. A lone French soldier, decorated with all the ribbons his country bestows for valor, cynically eyed the ragged effect.

Through the broad windows of the last section we saw a general seated in state. An aide at a near-by table was evidently writing dispatches of the progress to the front, for he held his wrist delicately poised with a paint brush and pensively recorded an occasional ideograph.

Staff officers, smiling and obsequious, emerged from the door. Up flocked the civil officials of the

city; men in voluminous silken skirts of orchid and gray, stiff brocaded jackets and perched upon their closely shaven heads black skull caps. With fluttering fans they made their greetings, drooping whiskers shaken in the staccato jerk of the head and shoulders as they bowed. In the midst of this ceremony, a white-capped cook unconcernedly stepped from his car and mingled with the crowd of dignitaries.

Towards afternoon, when our train finally crept into the station, our joy at its arrival prevented any thought of its lateness. We jumped aboard, captured a compartment—and started for Peking.

Two hours later, just a half mile beyond Tientsin, we were resting statically by a field that had attained great popularity as a graveyard. In China, geomancers, reading the portents, decree the time of a man's burial, and consulting the *feng shui,* the wind and water spirits, locate the place of his interment. So he reposes in some far territory, or as likely as not on a neighbor's ground. Here the fortune of the stars must have promised peace for "those who dwell in the long home"—to the detriment of the owner's harvest, since cone-shaped mounds had practically ousted the crops.

Cars were shunted past us. Wu Pei-fu's menagerie

of brown bears and monkeys, added to the expedition to test the air for gas perhaps, or the wiring of enemy trenches for electric current, were given the right of way.

Eventually we journeyed forward. The three-hour trip, technically the time span required to cover the ninety miles to the capital, lengthened to ten. Peking lay somewhere across that vast, monotonous stretch. We crawled along in the dusk, through barren spaces now, past silver streams, willow-shadowed. A wind, bitter, driving, cold, swept over the plains. The bank of low clouds was blown away, and through the rift, purple gray, appeared the Western Hills.

Beyond these Western Hills, they say—is paradise.

CHAPTER II

TWO HOUSES AND A SEQUEL

THE rickshaw Boy with the beguiling smile said: "I know, I know," when we gave him the address. Off, through the sunshine of a brilliant autumn morning we started in search of a house.

There are no real estate agents in Peking. Two methods are used to obtain a domicile. The passive principle is to sit comfortably in a hotel, for possible weeks or months or years, while friends inquire for a place, question their acquaintances, until finally someone goes home on leave and you slip into his well-cut grooves. The aggressive attitude was the one we preferred. We began by purchasing a newspaper and perusing advertisements, of which there were two.

Through the smoothly paved streets of the Legation Quarter we sped; past massive gates, guarded by the stone dogs of Fo, rampant and terrifying; gates also patrolled by marine guards of the respective countries, bored and dejected. The sharply rhythmic patter of the runners' feet on asphalt softened as we

slipped over the boundary of international territory, out into the thick, gray dust of a Peking road. An astonishing street of low, drab buildings was emphasized by curious notes; fretted windows; the gold and red façade of a butcher shop; a tottering arch, carved and painted. Open store fronts displayed stoves, tin bathtubs and the wholly inexplicable image of a life-sized, dappled horse. . . . This conglomeration made up the thoroughfare we came to know as Hatamên. We passed youths in flapping robes; women with tight trousers bound at the ankles, hair smoothed back to satin glossiness and a bright petalled flower of silk pinned in the coils.

Then the runners swerved down a hutung, past high, obliterating walls. A narrow slit of sky between these barriers, red lacquer doors abruptly breaking the monotony of gray surfaces, were all we could see as we twisted and turned through this maze of lanes.

The rickshaws halted simultaneously. The smiling Boy fingered the numbers above an unpretentious door. Ringing the bell he obligingly explained our errand to a servant who admitted us to the court.

"This belong German house," the Number One Boy objected officiously, referring to the ownership and

not to the architecture which was distinctly Chinese. "No belong English house."

Jim and I stared at the dwelling then at each other. "It's small," we agreed, magnanimously passing the nationality with a tolerant shrug.

The absent owner's dingy fur coats were strung on a line across the courtyard, exhaling an odor of camphor. "He's going home on leave," we opined and darted in to explore the premises.

Framed embroideries of glaring hues hit my vision with unpleasant force; but Jim discovered a stove. A huge, built-in affair of mud bricks, towering to the ceiling, imposing, unsightly.

"Why, it's a furnace!" Jim exclaimed gleefully. "The best I've ever seen in the Orient! I could write at this table with my back to the fire." He went over, patted the stove and in anticipation saw himself installed, enjoying the glow radiating from the coals.

This was the dining room, and I glanced around at the atrocities: steins on shelves, bead fringe dripping from the chandelier, red and blue goblets on the sideboard that seemed waiting to be raised in Rheinwein toasts: Hoch!

Jim caught my agonized glance. "Probably the man will want to take most of the stuff home with

him," were the propitiating words. "The rest we'll pack in a box and put away. You won't have to look at it all year. But Peking winter is desperately cold; I *must* have that furnace!"

Upstairs—and at that time we did not realize the wonder of a Chinese house containing two stories—we found a severely furnished bedroom. Next was a study with a map of China's fighting area and beside it on the table, binoculars and the morning paper with the war news marked. A bath with a green boiler and heater attached overwhelmed the mental reservations I had so steadily opposed to the house.

Disappointed that the owner was not home to conclude the transaction on the spot, fearful lest someone else should discover and covet that treasure of a stove, Jim left his visiting card with a note stating that we would return at two o'clock.

Other houses we decided not to consider, having found the ideal at the first venture. Quite contentedly we spent the remainder of the morning walking on the great wall that surrounds Peking.

However, the chance encounter of an acquaintance in the hotel lobby sent us lackadaisically after tiffin to view a house *he* recommended. Our acquaintance knew a friend of a friend who was leaving town. He

drew a diagram and gave us implicit but untrustworthy directions that the rickshaw Boy with great cunning unraveled, leading us through narrow, dirty alleys.

A gem of a place, we found. A wide, sunlit courtyard with a locust tree and a yellow bird swinging in a wicker cage suspended from the branches. A long room with rugs in muted tones of blue and rose; deep easy chairs over which were flung brocades of threaded silver: the gleam of brass and cloisonné. At one end, where a lounge stretched its luxurious length, a fireplace, with a sparkling blaze.

The owner of this dwelling was absent too, so with the amah who stitched in a corner of the quiet room, we left another note. All the way back to the German's place, we discussed the relative merits of fireplace and furnace, gauging comfort against luxury, the delight of the soul versus the needs of the body.

Jim was still tenacious of his stove when we reached the Teuton's establishment and the Number One Boy barred our entrance.

"Master no can see," he said.

"Why not?" demanded Jim. "We've come all this way——"

"Master sleep," the Boy explained firmly.

"Sleep!" Jim exploded. "Then wake him up! We left a chit saying we'd be here. . . ." His voice became a righteous roar, reverberating across the courtyard with the fixed intention of rousing the German from his slumbers.

More servants emerged from their quarters, walking on tip-toe with protesting hands raised to silence Jim. "Master sleep," they repeated softly, an antiphonal chorus in English, German and Chinese.

"I'll take the responsibility," Jim volunteered in a resounding bellow, directed squarely at the windows of the sleeping room. "This is an affair of importance!" With his eagerness to possess the stove was mingled solicitude for the owner, missing this golden opportunity to rent his house and repair to the Fatherland.

Frightened domestics scattered, consulting our rickshaw Boys in subdued tones.

"Wake him!" commanded Jim in final exasperated effort.

"Master——" The rickshaw Boy approached timidly. "House no can have. This Master no go. He stay long, long time. Number no belong proper. Near house, I show."

So he led us, meek and dejected, next door, which

was the place of the advertisement. It proved to be a rambling Chinese dwelling of bare walls, open courts, a slimy pool and a plum tree.

"*This* belong house," the Boy informed us, beaming. "Proper house. Forty-four room."

We fled.

We did not know the full bitterness of our misery until the second disappointment crowded close on the heels of the first. Hurrying back to the abode of the open fire we were met by the proprietress with a bright smile.

"My place . . . yes, it is attractive," she admitted. "True, I'm leaving for Shanghai. . . . But *I* rented three months ago."

Then began the real search. Following the custom that one applies for aid in this matter to friends of friends, we bearded in swift succession unknown but hopeful persons whose names had been given to us in Shanghai. A professor of the Methodist College, from the fastness of his shaded avenue, knew nothing beyond the confines of his comfortable compound; nor did the Y.M.C.A. man, contemplatively finishing his ice cream as we broke in upon him. Neither the Legation's Commercial Attaché nor the Scotch doctor could trace any vacancies in the lists or recall anyone

about to go home. Their good wishes followed us like blessings; but they offered no suggestions that were helpful.

We bumped violently over execrable lanes, winding and turning, evading droves of black pigs, sweeping babies from the path, hitting occasionally some indolent individual who, rather than budge, preferred to be bumped out of the way. On our desperate quest of the afternoon we were impressed by the identical psychology of each Peking resident. Houses there were, aplenty, he held with well-defined conviction. But equally insistent was his assertion that we must be patient until something turned up.

"I'm sure to hear of a place in a month or two," he would say earnestly. "Let's see . . . Hawkins, he'll be getting away by March . . . or June at the latest."

The six-month interval was not his affair. He counseled us not to waste time looking around, but to wait—for Hawkins or Perkins or Cummings to depart.

Haste was imperative. The daily bill paid at the hotel would have kept the establishment of a Manchu prince running comfortably. Moreover, we yearned

to settle under a roof of our own, having traveled steadily for months.

Of prospective places, there was but one: the remaining advertisement. Worn and weary, very stiff as to joints, haggard as to eyes, we studied it:

TEMPLE TO LET

A set of 20 chien in the Chin Sien Temple, 30 li from Sha-ho station, overlooking the valley & endless plains with best spring water & occasional foreign medical neighbor.

CHAPTER III

PEKING KUEI-CHÜ

THE rickshaw coolies asked to be hired by the week and in the frantic search it seemed the part of wisdom to add their wits to ours. A single gleam of hope was offered by a new resident who had not forgotten his weeks of hunting. This impenetrable city of gray walls with chimerical, vacant houses that neither advertised nor responded to our advertisements, could be entered, it appeared, by one means.

At the entrance to hutungs, pasted on lamp posts, were bright red patches of paper lettered in Chinese characters that told of houses for occupancy in that lane. We learned to spy these signs ten yards away; we discovered them on gates; in our zeal we frequently confused them with the blatant festival greetings that still adorned many portals. On sight our Boys would drop the shafts of the rickshaws and, with dirty fingers tracing each ideograph, spell out the news to us.

"Twenty-six room, Master," the lean, officious one would say.

Up and down the street they trotted until the correct door of the advertisement was ascertained. They tapped the thin brass knocker that emitted a brittle sound. Presently we heard a shuffling of padded feet, the drawing back of a bolt, and finally a frightened, grisly head poked out. Learning our purpose, the caretaker always invited us in with a deprecatory flourish of a feather duster—rarely did any appear without this official badge of office. So we made our way past the sleeping quarter of the old man where a goatskin was thrown over a narrow board for a bed and his pot of tea and chow bowl stood close within his reach.

By this method we penetrated curious dwellings. A gloomy foreign house in a compound of rank and evil weeds from which leered a Buddha with a smashed nose; a Rhineland castle, unsuspected in the heart of Peking. Near the Eastern Wall we came upon a dilapidated Chinese house of faded colors and dim flowers painted on old beams, wheat growing out of the tiled roof. Sunny and beckoning, it seemed to have been long waiting for the sound of silken footsteps. But Jim strongly objected to the crops

flourishing on the eaves and we feared that to uproot the plants would leave interstices through which the summer rains might lash.

Because of a notice prematurely posted, we stumbled into an occupied residence. A wretchedly dirty place it was, the paper hanging from the walls in damp, stained strips. We came upon a crowded room where children sprawled and women chattered; flies swarmed and clothes were scattered over double-decker iron beds.

I asked, with repugnance that must have been obvious: "These are the servants' quarters?"

"Oh, no!" a voice behind me answered in smooth, liquid English. "This is the best bedroom."

I turned. A small, wilted woman in gray silk faced me. She gave her name—and we knew her for the wife of a prominent Chinese official. In this squalor . . . Her price was high, and she positively refused repairs. She would neither cover the walls nor renew the paper window panes, now tattered in shreds where she had poked a pudgy finger through, prying for air in the heat of a past summer.

From this confusion we discovered an ideal house. Ideal at sight, though upon closer inspection many of its aspects did not quite merit the adjective.

Down an alley that terminated blankly against a brick wall, it was situated in one of those thoroughfares the Chinese know as "dead" streets and so had advantages not possessed by "live" streets where vendors pass all day, calling their wares with unrelenting zeal.

The place consisted of a courtyard, surrounded on all four sides by one-storied rooms. Each was a special entity, connected with the adjoining quarter only by the center space. We visioned excursions across this open court in the dead of winter, but spoke of bunny-skin bathrobes and slippers we had seen in the bazaars. We stressed the glistening freshness of the bright paint.

Stone floors—"Ah, but all Chinese houses have stone floors," we reassured each other cheerily and mentioned the Peking rugs woven of heavy wool especially for this contingency.

The caretaker smiled with blackened stumps of teeth and named the rental price. We looked again at the brilliant colors, the picturesque design and arranged to meet the owner for conference here the next day.

But the owner did not appear. Peace that had settled over us like a beneficent cloak, was vio-

lently rent. "Why did he not come?" we demanded.

With a placative grimace the caretaker gave us the inevitable response: "He did not come."

Perpetual experience never enables the foreigner to bear this repetition with equanimity. Yet it is the invariable response to every question. When we asked again and again: "Why he not come? Why? *Why?*" in vigorous staccato, the only answer was a bland echo: "W'y, W'y . . ."

Fragments reached us through the devious maze of the rickshaw Boys' interpretation. The Master of the house did not like foreigners. Yes, he wanted to rent to foreigners. Yes, the house was rented yesterday, just after we had gone. . . . This seemed to be the conclusive argument and they repeated insistently: "House all finish. House all go 'way."

Acute despair numbed us for an instant. This dear place—gone. Then simultaneously we spoke: "I don't believe it! The caretaker wants to keep his post." Jim, turning to the rickshaw coolie, demanded: "Where belong Master? I go see."

The owner, it appeared, lived in the Chinese city, the ragged purlieus beyond the walled Tartar City of Peking. To his residence we hurried. Down Hatamên Street, leaving this protected enclosure the Man-

chus had occupied when they conquered the capital, out Hata Gate . . .

Above battlements forty feet high rears this many storied crown, lofty pillars lifting a roof of sloping green tile. Ninety-nine feet the tower measures, constructed thus to permit the passage of good spirits who travel preferably at the altitude of a hundred feet. By the aperture that pierces the tremendous breadth we forged through a maelstrom of whirling dust clouds. Foot-weary men cursed, beating braying asses; cart wheels rumbled over the impervious stone; vendors bawled. The tumultuous din, the massed, striving crowds eternally sifting through, were reminiscent of some Biblical scene of wrath. Then, far above all, the high note of bugles sounded, like the doom of Jericho.

Beyond the pottery market we rushed, up the street where brass and copper workers hammered in irregular, unceasing dissonance.

The owner lived down a miry alley, but through the open door we saw the magnificent spirit screen that guarded his domain from evil, and a bowl of budding lotus flowering amid heavy, spreading leaves. A retainer denied us admission. More retainers ad-

vanced to support his refusal. A crowd collected around us to gape.

Presently a huge man, bulging with portly flesh, moved majestically to the portal. Like a Grand Vizier he harangued the rickshaw men, addressed the multitude with a quivering of weighted, flabby jowls and punctuated his oration by ponderous gestures.

"Please," we said for the fortieth time, "we want to ask the Master about renting his house."

But everyone continued to talk. A bargain of percentages apparently had to be worked out to a nicety between the rickshaw men and the Vizier before we were allowed a voice in the matter. Eloquently they bartered. Once this dignitary, bulbous face distorted to wrath, moved away—only to turn at the wild pleading of the rickshaw men and their bellowed concessions. Again, the runners grasped the shafts of the rickshaws and propelled us violently through the crowd—just ten paces—until the Vizier shouted terms after us.

Suddenly from out the house, as if escaping from a rat hole, darted an uneasy little man; the stiff brocade of his robes swished about his pattering feet. A gray felt hat poised above that eastern magnificence gave us the courage to arrest him. Like a rodent at bay,

he glared; the yellow skin, drawn parchment-like over his cheek bones, seemed taut with fear. Feeling as if we were torturing a wild animal, we yet held to the point and extracted from him the few words of English he could muster.

Yes, his uncle owned the house. Yes, his cousin was the owner of the dwelling of which we spoke. He addressed us in the name of his father. A representative with an interpreter would talk with us to-morrow. Wagons-Lits Hotel. Not to-day, his nephew was ill . . . And he bolted through the crowd.

Relationships are notably indefinite in China. But this muddle of consanguinity gave us no assurance that any one would appear the following day or indeed, any day, at the hotel.

However, a gentleman did await us the next morning, a plump youth with a bland, expressionless countenance. Accompanying him was an officer of the police in the dual rôle of interpreter and *deus ex machina.* In fluent English the latter explained to us that the concluding of a rental was usually treated with due ceremony and took two months to accomplish. But for our sakes—here he interpolated his

constant ingratiating smile—he would arrange it in space of weeks . . . or even days.

The price for the property was not exorbitant. The officer of the police unfurled his fan and asked that we pay four months' rent in advance, a request which we conceded as reasonable.

"For four months' pay, you stay one month in house," explained the interpreter, getting up and bowing politely.

"Four months' rent," we insisted gently to aid his benighted intelligence—"that pays for October, November, December and January."

"No," he countered promptly, "that pays for October. Begin November, you pay again."

His patience was exquisite. Not once, but a dozen times, he repeated the terms. We were enlightened only when we demanded with some asperity, what would become of the other three months' rent.

"That belong shoe money, key money for servants," he told us. "Peking *kuei-chü*. Owner servant, your servant, old servant, every one get cumshaw."

We said firmly that it was not foreign custom and that we were inalterably opposed to adopting it. We would be pleased to pay the price demanded, but not that preposterous extra.

"You are my friend," said the police officer, "my very good friend. All Americans my friend. For you I tell owner he must let you stay one month in house and you pay only three months' rent."

We thanked him—and went meditatively to tiffin.

CHAPTER IV

WE STEP THROUGH THE MOON DOOR

We were always late. The landlady gave us to understand that her clock was right because it was set by the timepiece of the Brazilian Minister's cook. Therefore it was not her affair that the soup was cold and the mutton chilled to inhospitable tepidness.

From the exalted prices of the hotel we had found a temporary refuge in her less comfortable but scarcely less costly establishment. Every hour under her roof spurred us to greater effort to obtain a home of our own.

"Now what would you be likin' for deserrt, the night?" she would ask encouragingly as we turned away from the third and last course of tiffin, a currant pudding.

We made suggestions with the eagerness of children wishing for the moon.

"Aye," Mrs. Macpherson conceded, listening with armed deference. "But do ye na like milk puddin's? There's the guid milk my friend from the Legation

do be sendin' me every day, now my health's so poor."

We did not like puddings of any description and we reiterated the statement with firmness.

Mrs. Macpherson looked at us with pity. "Aye," she murmured, "if ye'd only been brought up on guid milk puddin's. . . ."

She did her best to remedy the defects of our early diet by supplying us with food calculated to make brawn. Barley soup, she urged upon us, though it was our particular aversion; celery, because it drove away the rheumatics. "Turrnips," she told us with heavy solemnity, "aye, turrnips is good for the blood."

Her statements held a portentous quality as she sat at the head of the table, a great lump of a woman, bulking even larger in her dress of corduroy, peering at us with watery blue eyes, pushing back sandy gray hair that straggled about her sallow face. She mumbled between drawn lips, for she kept her teeth for church and the days when the parson called. Other times she conversed with an indistinct rumbling of r's and sucked her food like a sponge absorbing nourishment. Longingly she talked of the old country. We wondered what grotesque or fortuitous circumstances had lifted her from her proper environ-

ment and had set her down to be a lodging housekeeper in Peking.

Every morning she ignored foreign custom and went to market, haggling to the last copper for the provisions of the day. That accomplished, she rickshawed to the Legation Quarter, there to consort with the housekeepers and nursemaids of the Ministers' establishments, to the detriment of her housekeeping arrangements. For she let the stove stay out of repair for three days, and food was precariously cooked at the Russian's next door. Because she neglected the piping system a coolie carried our bath water, tepid from the journey, upstairs in petroleum tins.

At dinner that same day of our negotiations, she greeted us stiffly. "So ye're leavin'. I hear ye be rentin' a Chinee house. Take my word for it ye don't know when ye're well off at all, at all."

"But how did *you* know we were taking a place?" I asked with curiosity.

"My friend at the Legation do be tellin' me. This mornin' the police was fixing the formalities to be lettin' you in the sooner."

Jim and I smiled. She was very near the truth—but quite on the wrong track.

Only that afternoon, by a freak of fate, we had

stopped at the American Drug Store on Hatamên Street to demand a panacea for the severe dust cold with which each person struggles before he becomes acclimated to Peking. We asked the pharmacist, as we asked everyone, for a house. And he knew of one for rent!

It was a dream house with vine-hung walls. A moon door—and through the curved aperture, a glimpse of latticed windows.

Red-lacquered, wood-framed, these fretted panes of translucent paper. Each tiny beam end supporting the tiled roof was vivid green embossed with a design of gold. Carved and painted lotus flowers blossomed on the door-posts. Small—yet it was the setting for a Manchu princess with vermilion-tinted cheeks . . . a place fashioned for quiet happiness.

Two sunny courtyards! Five rooms for us, then a kitchen, servants' quarters. Running water! Electric lights!

These last considerations concluded the bargain. The lacquer was brilliantly red. Oleanders bloomed in our courtyard. But our eyes feasted hungrily on the atrocious, glaring bulbs that would give light without the bother of oil lamps. Water would come to us without patronizing the squeaking wheelbarrows

RED-LACQUERED, WOOD-FRAMED WINDOWS OF TRANSLUCENT PAPER; OLEANDERS BLOOMED IN THE COURTYARD.

which trundled that necessary commodity from brackish wells.

"Yes, we've taken a Chinese house," we admitted to Mrs. Macpherson, without enlightening her as to the precise one.

"Were ye no comfortable in my nice solid place," she inquired plaintively, "that ye have to be takin' one of them flimsy contraptions? It do be mosquito nettin' for the summer, then paper in the winter and money to be spent every day in your life."

We offered the most patent excuse for our departure—the stove—that could neither contrive to give us hot water nor cook our food. We refrained from calling attention to other defects of the establishment: the missionary beyond the partition who talked all night in a tone between a roar and a rumble; the Russian virtuoso next door who practiced interminably weird scales on the violin; the amiable baby in the neighborhood who perpetually chanted la-la-la-la-la. . . . We merely emphasized that recalcitrant stove.

"Aye," admitted Mrs. Macpherson, "the stove be abreakin' my hearrt——"

In our jubilation at the imminent departure we hardly spared commiseration for her obvious incompe-

tence. Yet she gave freely of sympathy for our fate.

"Ye're troubles be just beginning. I had a young couple once come from Shanghai who took a Chinee house." Then reflectively Mrs. Macpherson added: "Aye, but *she's* dead, the now."

CHAPTER V

BAZAARS

On the birthday of the Sage, Kong Fu-tzu, we began to furnish the shell of our house. Flags were flying from every shop, the ugly but significant banners of the Republic, with stripes of red, yellow, blue, white and black, indicating the five sections of the nation.

Perhaps Confucius, approving our plan, gave beneficent aid in our purchases. Or possibly some light of mad determination in our eyes hypnotized the shopkeepers. No one ever believed us when we told of our feat. Afterwards, when it took our combined efforts for five wrangling mornings to achieve a nest of tea tables, we ourselves hardly found it credible that we had accomplished this collection in two hectic days.

Jim and I had distinctly different ideas as to the necessities of Chinese housekeeping, but amicably we took turns in pursuing our hobbies. Agreed on the point of chairs and beds, we sped up and down Morrison Street, darting into shop after shop, comparing

prices, woods and workmanship with rapidity. When those objects were acquired and together with a dining table were piled on patient coolie backs, we did not pause to enjoy the triumph, but plunged on—adding a bathtub to the carrier's already tremendous load.

The mattress problem was more grave. Exhausting the shops of the Tartar City we ventured again beyond the gates. All bargaining was necessarily done by the rickshaw men. They elaborately arranged for the cumshaw to be allotted by the storekeeper before they heeded our suggestions. Our order was of dimensions beyond the daily routine of the man who sold flat cushions covered with coolie cloth, his stock in trade neatly piled behind his counter. It took a long time to explain that the structures required were to be just once the width of Jim's malacca stick and twice its length.

The maker of cushions always brought out an abacus. Interminably clicking the beads back and forth with a great twirling of the little finger, he calculated the amount of cotton filling we needed. Again the clicking was resumed to determine the price. When we objected to the preposterous amount named, he inevitably disappeared into a burrow and brought out a handful of straw he proposed to insert in the

center. Once we had to withdraw from an advantageous offer because we glimpsed an old man in the interior, bending over the work, nearly blinded with trachomatous eyes. Invariably samples of cloth, white or blue, had to be scrutinized patronizingly by the rickshaw men.

These runners, reaping this rich harvest of commissions, grew inflated with their importance as our purchases increased. By afternoon, the lean, officious one had achieved a cigarette and an easy manner of leaning over a counter and arguing with shopkeepers. The lesser Boy, who was my puller, acquired a hair cut that made him look like a convict and revealed deep, disfiguring scars. Both were late after tiffin because, we surmised, of an extra order of chow and the pressing need of collecting their cumshaw from the shops where our purchases had been made.

Out Hata Gate again we went, stopping at the pottery market with its outspread wares: circular porcelain garden seats, clumsy bathtubs of marble composition, casseroles of rich, brown earthenware. Kitchen dishes lay on the ground in low rows, tied with rope, rattling in precarious fashion. Bowls and cannisters for tea and spices we rapidly bought, also dark, mottled pitchers, great water jars.

For plates, platters and bouillon cups, I proceeded to the porcelain stores. In China, with the sublime confidence of the griffin, I had expected to find all manner of delightful wares and indulge in an orgy of lavish buying. That fallacy was soon exploded. Difficult it was to discover dishes that were not bowl-shaped, cups that possessed handles. Always in my search I encountered grave Chinese gentlemen, in brocades and scanty, drooping whiskers who were buying small bird dishes, fitting them in cages. These tiny receptacles were adorable, varied in design, of delectable ware that the purchaser twisted in long, sensitive fingers, enjoying the translucent texture as he held it up to the light. While the bird, released for the moment, hopped about on the twig, showing his sleek, gray body, exhibiting by a twist of the head the scarlet triangle at his throat—and chirped his approval.

Up and down hutungs we rode, followed by whining beggars, the way now and again blocked by a wedding procession. We huddled close to the wall to let these pageants pass. Dirty urchins staggered under the weight of tall, gilded lanterns. Musicians in filthy rags, covered by the conventional green robes, straggled by, beating huge drums, blowing weird

fifes. There followed wedding gifts in boxes of elaborately designed gold lacquer, carried on poles by two bearers. Old men feebly tottered under such burdens, for the powerful beggars' guild insists upon supplying these attendants. Without fees to propitiate the mendicants no wedding could progress, and any attempted deviation from this rule would inevitably result in a riot. But their presence in the borrowed robes of ceremony gave a farcical aspect to the tawdry magnificence.

More flutes and fifes piped their bizarre snatches of music without rhythm or melody—and the bride's chair appeared. In front wavered two huge umbrellas of embroidered silk; a towering fan, sparkling with mirrors; banners. Then came the palanquin of vermilion. Inside, behind closely fitted curtains of intricate embroidery, was enthroned the bride.

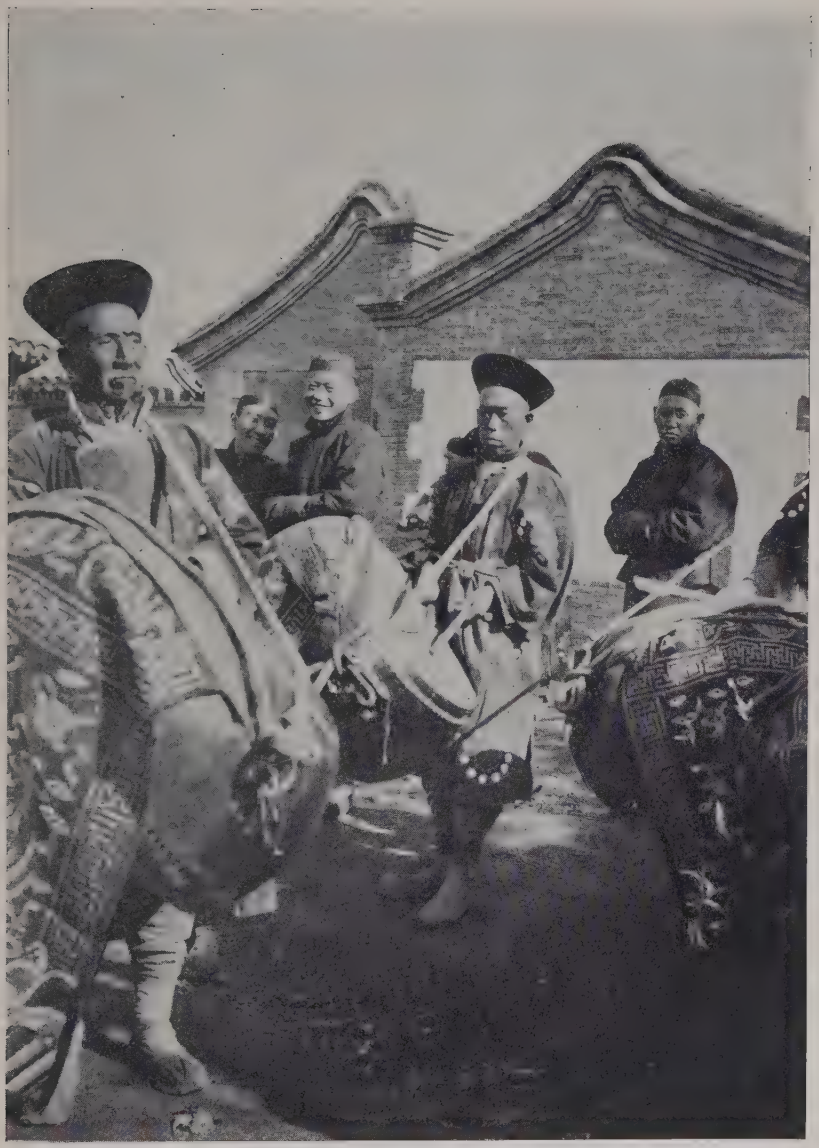
Peking custom permits a second green palanquin to follow, bearing the bride's mother or some near friend, provided the cyclic animal governing the birth hour of this person is not inimicable to the animal of the groom. Much consideration is given to the selection of this friend. Geomancers are consulted. It must be remembered that the tiger is an enemy of the serpent; the horse will not tolerate the ox; nor will

the sheep consort with a rat. This custom of the second sedan chair, however, alleviates the ordeal of the young girl, who without her volition enters a strange family and for the first time views the husband who is to be her absolute master.

The blind soothsayers must have foretold this as a propitious day for weddings. On our shopping excursion we encountered not one but a dozen of these processions, wending through the city streets like gleaming threads in a dull, shabby brocade.

One shop into which I happened that afternoon was a bazaar of wedding presents. Meretricious *objets d'art,* obviously of Japanese fabrication, lined the walls; vases, laughing Buddhas and rows of china soap dishes painted with emaciated, straggling flowers. Never again shall I view a bridal procession of heavy, gilded chests without the suspicion that the bearers are not carrying priceless treasures to that poor, smothered bride, but simply bringing a string of soap dishes.

Further on, we reached Furniture Street. Outside the shops men were sawing tremendous logs by hand. Bending backwards and forwards they pulled, their stripped bodies in perfect unison. Not from the shoulders came the strain, but from the inordinately over-



THE WEDDING DRUMS.

developed muscles banding their waists. Here other men constructed doors of the cross-barred, intricate design that long ago delighted Chippendale. We penetrated dozens of warerooms and picked up a wardrobe, eagerly bought because it contained the only available mirror in Peking that did not distort one's face to a grimace.

More amusing than this strictly utilitarian purchase was Jim's lucky find of an altar table. Of dark, hard wood, beautifully sculptured with dragons, even in the dust it gave promise. The crafty rickshaw Boy edged into the dim shop, stood on tiptoe to reach the height where it towered perilously on the tops of other tables and sniffed at it intelligently.

"Camphor wood," he pronounced.

As Mrs. Macpherson told us that evening, "If the wood smell of camphor, it's sure not to be. They do be deceivin', the Chinee. They put balls of camphor in boxes to give the wood a whiff."

The Boy ordered the table into the street with a lordly gesture. He rubbed a marred spot with distinct disdain to lower the price for us, believing evidently that his profits from the transaction would not be affected. He whacked at the carving with a feather duster in spite of our choking protests. The table

proved to be not camphor, but of Chinese blackwood, gleaming as when it had stood in some home with candles alight and incense curling to small, benevolent gods.

Past the enticing Street of Jade and the Street of Lanterns, we hurried on. We dared not linger while there were necessities to be bought. Tables to the number of seven, we obtained, vital every one of them. Chests of drawers, we needed, finger bowls—odd, incongruous objects that had always before been taken for granted now made themselves prominent by their lack.

We even attempted a harried quest for rugs. First in the quarter beyond Hata Mên, we penetrated factories where children in dark, stuffy holes worked at huge looms. The design was outlined on the horizontal, tightly drawn threads. Twenty boys sat at a bench along the stretch of rug, knotting the bits of wool, blue, faun or maroon, to the taut threads. Then with tremendous shears they clipped off the ends, smoothing the nap of the rug.

The warerooms of these factories were musty apartments where the dirt of ages collected on piled up rugs. Men dragged out each weighty piece, shook it and sent bunches of fluff scurrying toward us,

clouds of evil dust that we escaped only by a dash into the courtyard. From that disadvantageous position we peered through the trellised windows, glimpsing patterns obscurely as the dust subsided. Even as we vetoed these particular specimens, the men trailed us across the court, out into the alley, with carpets still flapping.

In the Ch'ien Mên district second-hand rugs were kept in the antique stores. Here the tale was not that blue dye is the most expensive; nor did the abacus go clicking to ascertain the price per foot. With greater imagination these dealers weaved fantastic stories of antiquity. We saw rugs of all descriptions: some almost new, others worn to rags, trodden by thousands of feet. All were universally classed as having been woven in the golden days of the glorious Ch'ien Lung —and China's great monarch died in 1799!

The rug was not obtained that day, but other important items were added. Very tired that night, we nodded over the dinner table.

"Do you know what we forgot?" Jim asked.

I turned away, for I did not want to hear.

Jim's enthusiasm, unflagging even at this hour, demanded an ice box!

CHAPTER VI

LOHAN

EARLY the next morning we rickshawed over to the new residence. Vividly shone the lacquered entrance gate of red, the projecting beam ends of black and gold. The eaves of the house were raised in a lilting line of tile, reminiscent of the tent coverings that were the first dwellings of the Mongols and upon which model the Chinese still erect their structures.

Tapping the wafer thin disk of the knocker with an air of proprietorship, we were admitted by the coolie who kept the gate. He eyed us with dubious curiosity. From a remote section of the country, imbued with the dumb antagonism of the yokel, he did not favor the *Yang Kwe-tze,* even though these "foreign devils" had brought him wealth in a day. For, on every dollar's worth of goods we had bought, it had been his privilege to collect from the merchant five coppers as his cumshaw before he deigned to admit the purchase. Again Peking *kuei-chü!*

The morning sun glistened on our open vestibule,

the painted lattice work of green and gold. The wall opposite the door was the spirit screen, intended to break the rush of any evil hobgoblins of the East that dart in. These malignant phantoms are able to travel only in a straight line. So they must often have bumped themselves to bits on our ornamental fresco that depicted a hunter with a cumbersome rifle firing aimlessly at gigantic ducks whirling above his head. This was Chinese art in its most modern phase —of doubtful taste, but efficacious in confounding demons.

To the right opened our courtyards. First the Moon Door, then successive portals of bright green. On these gates were vermilion lozenges inscribed with characters of import. The first series admonished fidelity to the family, duty to one's ancestors, loyalty to rulers, sincerity to friends. The second, leading within, displayed the characters of happiness, riches, longevity, good luck. The quadruple gates to the last court invited us with more seriousness to be ordered by modesty, economy without stinginess, simplicity and correct etiquette.

So we entered our domain.

The servants were waiting. Lo, the cook and Han, the Number One Boy. I trusted that the combination

of names might prove auspicious, for Lohan is the appellation given to small lucky gods, the cup-bearers, as it were, to the greater deities that rule the Eastern Pantheon.

I needed all the consolatory omens that I might find, for the cook was a short, dour individual, with limp hands listlessly adroop from his bent shoulders. Always his mouth was open in bewilderment; always his hair swept up from his forehead in agitation. I had been told of a man whose cook—after seventeen months in his employ—made enough money to open a grocery store in Tientsin. Naturally I was apprehensive lest successive cooks, leaving me month after month, should set up groceries on every corner with the profits of my kitchen. Although I had no great confidence in Lo's abilities, I gave orders that he should buy utensils, provisions and sufficient Chinese stoves to conjure up a dinner for us that evening.

It is possible in Peking to board with one's cook, paying him so much per head each day, according to contract. Years ago if a person was unexpectedly invited out to dinner, his Number One Boy followed with his repast, serving him course by course at the strange table. This extreme procedure is no longer followed. Many claim that the present system of

combining wages and food by written agreement makes for a harmonious household and a minimum of extravagance. However, a strong desire to follow our own taste in the selection of menus prevented the experiment.

Han, the Boy, was larger than Lo, with a more dominating personality and a countenance distinctly pleasing. Immediately we considered him our prop and guide. He was interpreter between us and the cook, as well as that outside world whose spoken language, like its written, was heiroglyphic. Han explained he had a "sick ear" and might not hear our orders. We noticed, however, that as he caught our tones the affliction ceased to worry him. He appeared delightful to the eye, garbed in brilliant blue brocaded trousers and slippers to match; over this, buttoned from chin to toe, a fresh white robe.

Han had placed the furniture to the best of his ability. True, the bathtub had to be extracted from the pantry, the altar table dislodged from the kitchen. Yet I felt distinct relief to see that all the pieces had arrived.

For the new address was weird and wonderful. When the rickshaw men gave it nonchalantly, I always wistfully gazed back at the purchases, wonder-

The Spirit Screen to Break the Rush of Any Malignant Phantoms.

ing if we would ever see them again. Written, it was involved yet comprehensible. But the sinologues who had worked out the romanization of Chinese characters had either been tone deaf or deliberately wicked. The spoken phrase differed shockingly from the written. It had to be said very quickly with definite emphasis in the least expected places. No matter how glib the tongue became there always seemed a syllable too many. Translated it was: The Front Street of the Two Storied House of the Chao Family.

Satisfactory as the house itself was, we noted painful discrepancies in the details of the ménage and started off to repair the gaps. Up and down the hutungs again, all day we scurried.

Toward four o'clock, as the evening chill—that peculiar, penetrating Peking cold—crept over us, Jim suddenly demanded: "How are we going to sleep in that place to-night? Blankets? But we haven't enough blankets to keep us warm! We *must* have eiderdowns."

I agreed—with alacrity.

Difficult to convey our need to the rickshaw men. We asked for coverings of bird feathers, thus approximating the truth in the vernacular. They led us to a butcher shop where varnished ducks of glisten-

ing red were hung, and then to a French milliner's! But we persisted. Miraculously enough, from our pantomime, the germ of our idea infected their brains. They trotted to a shop of worsted and imported perfumes down an isolated lane and explained our wish to the manager. That personage nodded, brought out a down pillow for our inspection, calculated on the abacus the vast amount of feathers we would require —and suggested that he could supply us in ten days.

"To-night!" Jim insisted. His enthusiasm was like a flame, lashing the easy individuals into action. "We must have both coverings to-night!"

They laughed—the manager, the rickshaw men, the dozen clerks and hangers-on.

"At half-past ten," Jim reiterated.

"But you ask the impossible," I protested mildly.

A fanatical light glinted in his eyes. "I had a suit made in five hours once! This *can* be done!" He took out a roll of bills and waved it gently back and forth.

The manager eyed it drowsily, hypnotically.

"Cumshaw, if both covers are delivered to-night!" Jim announced.

With a gulp that was like a sob, the storekeeper grasped the money and said: "I try."

Weary, we returned to the house. Suddenly it became home. Lights shone through latticed windows agleam like old lanterns. Inside, the table was laid with precision, chairs drawn up hospitably. Presently a steaming, delectable bouillon was brought in by the Boy. A grilled steak followed, edged by minute, sculptured flowers: roses cut from carrots, lilies fashioned from turnips with delicate care. For our delight there were peas, fresh and tender, tomatoes stuffed to luscious perfection, potatoes, crispy brown, braised celery.

Afterwards we moved about the room, bringing books to scatter on the tables, pictures, a silver bowl and a precious bit of porcelain. The huge green smilax plant that had been my latest acquisition, spread its feathery branches like a brilliant mist.

At ten o'clock a commotion raged at the door. Voices, and the struggle of men in argument. Never quite sure what might be happening in these days of civil war, we hurried out to investigate. Some vague notion of Chang Tso-lin . . .

There, in the dimness of the night, loomed two tremendous bulks. Not elephants astray. Not perambulating haystacks—but the blessed feather coverlets!

CHAPTER VII

GUESTS

THE odor of incinerated toast had assailed us at dawn. While I dressed, Jim hovered in the courtyard, keeping a distant watch over breakfast preparations, for fear that Lo would begin violently and prematurely frying bacon and poaching eggs.

Lo had inquired deferentially through the Boy whether I liked young eggs or old eggs. Remembering the specimens I had seen pickled in lime for alleged hundreds of years, I replied firmly that I liked them young, very, *very* young. In a further effort to please he had scalloped a pomolo, that savage grapefruit of South China, thick-skinned and coarse fibered, until it grinned like the teeth of a Jack-o'-Lantern.

Guests had been asked to tea that first day. Leaving for Shanghai by boat they had but this opportunity to visit our domicile. Cordially, but with some trepidation, we had invited them.

Neither owners nor servants were quite oriented in the new quarters. Jim, hunting a persistent mos-

quito, had dashed inadvertently through a partition, revealing an aperture before unsuspected. Windows and doors gave way precipitously under our clumsy fingers. This flimsy façade facing the court contrasted with the solid, fortress-like construction of the outer walls. Soon it was reduced to a ragged condition, resembling those remote country inns where all night long one hears the plop, plop of breaking panes as the natives poke peep holes through the lattice to view the travelers.

So the Boy followed us around the house with a dish of flour paste and strips of paper the color of old wax to repair the damage.

The subsequent havoc wrought by Jim through his aversion to centipedes was more difficult of repair. Knowing the California variety, dangerously poisonous, he ordered the Boy to kill one skittering across the wall. Han, being a Buddhist, had prejudices against taking even a lowly form of animal life and picked up the insect to evict him. "He was a good Boy," Jim ruminated with mournful pity at Han's fate.

"Eatee paper," the Boy explained. "Bad bug!"

Han didn't die; didn't even have a fit. But Jim's dislike of the pests still persisted. A second speci-

men he drastically pursued with his walking stick, striking the ceiling and discovering it was not the solid plaster we had supposed, but the thinnest of paper. Through the rent he had torn these thousand-legged creatures marched in long processional, without the arduous task of nibbling their way.

Presently, to buy new ceiling covering, Jim rode into town. Into the rickshaw with him were piled a huge water can that had sprung a leak the first evening; sundry tins of rancid butter; and the two eiderdown covers that required a foot added to their breadth. The rickshaw coolie trundled his burden down devious alleys for the laudable purpose of hiding Jim's ignominy and saving his own face.

Jim returned with a stove—a dear little foreign stove with tiny legs sticking perkily up in the air as the coolies carried it into the court.

The Chinese stoves we had been using were cylinders of tin lined with clay. Coal-balls, egg-shaped morsels concocted of coal dust and dirt, were burned. A thin metal shelf held the cooking utensils.

Lo, having produced such a creditable dinner on his three stoves in a row, I was inclined to let him stick to his medium. But the impossibility of baking cake on such an arrangement led us to this innovation.

The diminutive foreign range was so small that the legs had to be raised on stones built up two feet from the ground. It was gently lifted to a corner of the vast kitchen. I admired the cunning oven door, the six tiny lids . . .

Suddenly the cook began to thump these lids. He jerked open a damper; shook it as a terrier shakes a bone; rattled the grate, explosively cursing its mechanism. The coolies who had brought the stove protested violently.

Then Lo reared himself and grasped a poker. With a strangling cry he fell upon the range. Brandishing his weapon he unexpectedly ripped open a seam down the center. Black stove polish flew. That which appeared to be iron was but a clever filling to cover up a large rent of faulty construction.

Three men had three separate fits of *ch'i* in the kitchen. Jim and I retreated to distant corners. We had gleaned the fact that Chinese fighting in deadly earnest do not yell, but silently begin the process of clawing out each other's eyes. Therefore we did not fear immediate extinction of the three combatants. As soon as we could extricate the cook we offered a word of compromise. If his feelings were injured by the flaw, why not let the stove merchant supply him

Successive Portals of Bright Green Inscribed with Vermilion Characters.

with some necessary piping to compensate for the defect of the crack?

The cook was intent on his cumshaw, justly his perquisite. In no mood for compromise, he rejected the stove with a final gesture of scorn. Rising to astonishing heights, using the only English he was ever heard to utter, he demanded: "What money Master pay?"

The coolies, still displaying their "wrath matter," began to carry off the range we had so much desired. Clearly the situation was beyond our control.

At a word of permission to adjust matters according to his judgment, Lo flung on his long outer robe that covered the informal kitchen garb of black Canton sateen trousers and jacket, and departed headlong in a cloud of dust.

Tiffin was delayed and finally cooked and served by the estimable Han. Shortly after three o'clock Lo returned, wearing a pleased grin and followed by minions, bearing the same range, but now repaired. They proceeded to set it up, hammering with vigor, sticking the pipe out of the kitchen window and tying it in place with wire to withstand Peking gales.

Han, running hither and thither, directed operations with zeal. At a critical instant he was inter-

rupted by the necessity of negotiating with the Russian laundryman and called to beg my assistance. We stood there, a triangle of inimical tongues, unable to transmit messages from one to the other. How to convey to the Boy that starch was required? "Stiff," I said eloquently. "Allee samee this," pointing to the only stiff thing about the house, the exterior wall.

"Ah," returned the Boy intelligently. "Makee clean!"

Han poured Chinese words of invective force over the meek, cowed Russian, dazed and uncomprehending. The latter shook his head feebly and handed me a list, headed: *"Russian Wsah Huse.—Man, Woman, Childr—"* The articles of apparel were written below in cryptic, Slavic letters. Nothing could have helped us but the Buddha of the Lama temple who is known as the Little-God-Who-Speaks-Russian.

This confusion was at its height when the matting men arrived. To cover the stone floors, rushes are fashioned approximately to measure at the shop, brought to the house in long rolls for the final fitting. Close against the walls the outer edges are placed, then the center is woven to the required inch; ends are tucked under and others, projecting, are cut off with a sharp knife-stroke. These men scattered the ward-

robe and chairs in the courtyard, heaved the bathtub in a flower bed.

Hovering in anticipation between the courts, I knotted a ribbon at my belt as the clock struck four. Simultaneously the doorbell rang. Our guests for tea had arrived.

Motioning my husband to meet them at the vestibule, delay their passage, I marshaled the débris back into the house. Through closed doors I heard a high, sweet English voice saying: "We must be quite late. So unpardonable of us, but the rickshaw men had difficulty in locating the address. . . ."

These first visitors, coming at four, stayed until eight. When they departed we breathed a faint sigh of relief that nothing had gone wrong. Not very wrong——

Regardless of guests, the cook scurried back and forth with tins of condensed milk, submitting various brands, all of which I approved, endeavoring to stop his excursions. Finally he produced the genuine article in a borrowed bottle, flourishing it before us in obvious triumph.

The Boy gyrated among the guests like a whirling dervish, passing cake and tarts and toast, tarts and toast and cake in rapid, incoherent succession. After

the tea service had been taken away Han was asked to bring another cup for a belated, unexpected guest. He insisted upon resetting the arrangement for the whole party and showed how excessively pained he was when I refused a series of teas.

Han came in one other time that afternoon and paused politely in the doorway. "Missie wantchee bas?" It was his hour to heat the tank for the evening tub, and he permitted himself no deviation from the routine of one established day.

"No," I answered and waved him away.

"Master wantchee bas?" he persisted, pursuing his duty to the end.

"Yes," Jim agreed hurriedly.

My guests gazed at me interrogatively and I murmured in irrelevant justification that I'd had a bath that morning.

The sun slipped away from our windows; evening came with a chill wind rattling the brittle leaves. Han brought in a Chinese stove for warmth, on it a copper kettle of boiling water to save us from asphyxiation. With the crisp crackle of new matting sounding under foot, the guests wandered about, examining our treasures, as is the custom of the East. These people were Shanghai residents of twenty years standing.

Nevertheless they found delight in the novelty of our quarters. Europeans in Shanghai keep to their own architecture, not having perfected the Chinese dwelling as a habitation—as in Peking. They even seemed to enjoy the novel method we had of rolling up the window shade; this being accomplished by a smooth motion of the palm of the hand, causing the Korean parchment to curl neatly over a small stick.

Leaving reluctantly, turning enviously for a last glance at the carved and painted lotus that bloomed above our portals, the guests finally tore themselves away. Their adjectives trailed across the court, through the lacquer door, lingering down the street. Jim and I shut ourselves within our tiny world, at last alone without echoes in the frosty night and watched, above the tile fretwork of our compound wall, the slim, silver crescent of the moon.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TWO WHO WALKED HAND IN HAND

On our first walk we discovered the proximity of the east city wall. Every stroll brought some surprise. During these rambles that became our daily custom after tea, we glimpsed amazing and always enchanting bits of existence.

There are no vistas in Peking; only high gray walls banding narrow hutungs. Yet the streets awakened under our vision, like a piece of tapestry springing to life. At sunset a file of camels trailed down a lane in a cloud of golden dust. Or three blind beggar women, wraith-like figures from some dim, shadowed limbo, swayed uncertainly over the rough road like wind-blown leaves. A musician strolled by, absently playing a three-stringed fiddle . . .

The city walls looming gigantically above us were our first objective. Climbing a grassy slope to the height of forty feet, we came to the broad avenue of masonry that is the summit, composed of brick hardened to the solidity of stone.

To the east, peering through the crenelations, we viewed a desolate expanse. Near by drowsed a canal where ducks paddled and barges were slowly poled beneath the willows; huddled directly below were a few straggling houses. From afar in the deepening twilight, came a death call, a harsh, despairing wail. It was a woman's voice, attempting to wrest from oblivion the soul of a loved one, trying to hold the spirit on the verge of departure, clutching, as it slipped away to the Yellow Springs.

On the other side, overlooking our city, the eye was astounded to find no metropolis of dingy gray brick, such as we had known below. Instead there was a vast forest of waving green—soft, undulous, grateful to the vision. Every courtyard had its trees and the total effect effaced walls, blotted out tiled roofs. Coal Hill and the white cone of the Dagoba jutted above this miraculous forest. Beyond the farthest reach of the southern walls we saw the faint blue dome of the Temple of Heaven.

Along our Wall we discovered the Observatory, with curious instruments, large globes and quadrants upheld by writhing bronze dragons. Here, six centuries ago the Mongols consulted their astrologers who read the courses of the stars. Thus were the cor-

rect dates for dynastic marriages and funerals ascertained.

Arabs came in the sixteenth century, adding their astrological craft to the sum of Chinese sorcery. They retained the official appointment until the Jesuit missionaries displaced their magic by mathematical skill. Father Verbiest a hundred years later gained the control of the Observatory. Under his orders instruments were brought from France, others cast here. In place of a superstitious study of the planets, he introduced methods extraordinarily scientific for his day and age.

Farther along the Wall, the French Legation guard practiced bugle calls. After an arduous rehearsal these Annamites, soldiers of Indo-Chine, with the *béret bleu* of their corps, went swinging back to their quarters, a dozen of them trumpeting into the sunset as they marched.

For a long while we watched the glow fade over the faint blue outline of the Western Hills. Only when the great streak of flame was obliterated did we descend to the dim sanctity of the city. Little girls crouched along the wall to catch the last gleam of light. Babies, they were, of four or five years, bend-

ing over boxes of black pig bristles, sewing the irregular bunches into toothbrushes of redwood.

Another walk we took of an evening led through a busy, narrow street, down which sheep, marked with magenta, were herded to the butchery. Shops crowded close; stores of the rice merchants side by side with those where they sold *sycee,* spirit money, silver tinsel the people burn on the altars of their gods.

Another stall marketed vegetables and there we watched a gleeful infant choose carrots and throw them prodigally in the scales. His idolatrous mother ceased wrangling for a handful of Chinese onions in order to pamper his desire. Splashed with the red paint of happiness was his tiny nose; daubed with luck signs of vermilion the shaven forehead. In his ears hung silver rings such as are worn only by girls, to cheat the jealous gods into believing that this adored one was of the despised sex. The mother called. "Ya-t'eu," came the tender, caressing voice. Again we knew the deities were tricked, for the precious heir bore the name of a slave girl.

At the corner of the street an old, old man stooped over a broken rice bowl. Cementing it, he bound it firmly about with a string. Bad luck, hunger follow the breaking of a rice dish, so he skillfully patched

that luck together, catching up as much of good fortune as he could. With a stringed instrument like a primitive fire drill, he made a hole in the porcelain. A brass tack to hold together the fragments was driven in with soft taps of a hammer. At last he went on his way, shouldering his utensils and tray of cements, whanging on a large metal disk. The reverberation echoed: "New luck for old—new luck for old——"

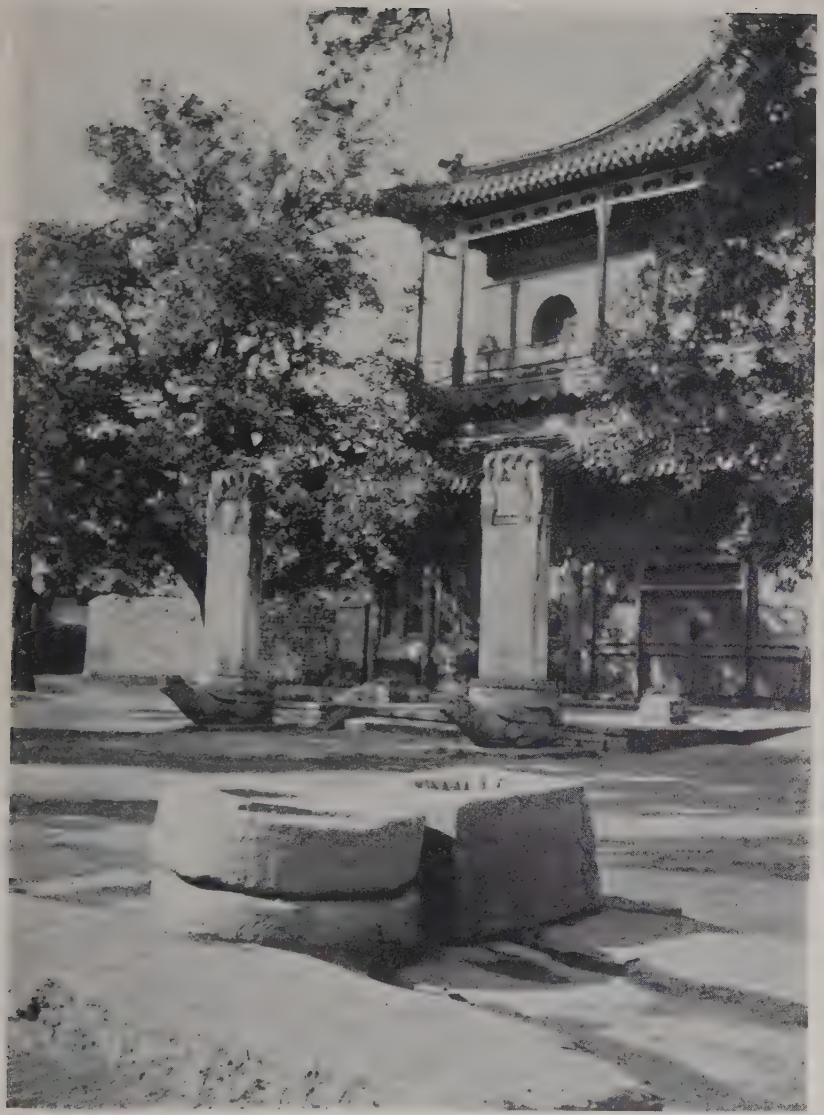
Along deserted streets we went, where green branches dripped over a wall; past the stone door-posts of many a great house where the squat figures of Pekinese dogs, idiotically squashed yet smiling, guarded the entrance. Silence—then the thin piping of a flute, a will-o'-the-wisp note in the twilight.

We came on a vendor of doves who had stopped before a house. Having put his crates to the ground he gossiped with the servants as he tested a curving bow. He fitted no arrow, but to a notch in the string affixed a button-shaped piece of lead. Sighting a crow, he aimed. It fluttered down. The vendor laughed—as if he knew he was no mere seller of iridescent love birds, but fitted for the hunting of great prey.

With this laugh, silence was shattered. A young

donkey, passing peacefully, suddenly rolled in the dust of the road, kicking his heels, braying with inordinate ferocity. Two rival food peddlers, intoning the evening call for chow, discovered each other and bawled murderously down the same alley. Then came a man with a python-skin drum. A ball was attached to the drumhead and he swung it rhythmically back and forth. At its deep, resonant boom, barred idle doors opened and out tottered women on lily feet. Crowding around him with dust pans and blackened baskets, they gave two coppers for the evening supply of charcoal. This was weighed in the scale against the dealer's string of copper cash, his arbitrary standard of measurement, and the little sticks doled out. Pandemonium—where an instant before silence had deepened to the intensity of a well.

They came to know us, evening after evening as we passed. *Wonk* dogs no longer sprang at us with a snarl. People occasionally ventured a half smile. The man who roasted chestnuts in an iron cauldron over a blazing fire nodded. The seller of toys halted his cart to show us plaster dolls, poor, misshapen puppets, crudely colored, swaying on an oval base. He had camels, too, with popping bead eyes, genuine, but mangy fur; candies of sesamun seed. He allowed



THROUGH THE LEAVES GLEAMED THE TILED ROOFS OF AN OLD TEMPLE.

us to examine his lottery, a box covered with paper marked into squares. Broken now was the surface where children's fingers had plundered the sweets. The seller of minute crab-apples, just the size of cherries, held up a string to tempt us. A woman crouched at the street corner, displaying persimmons, yellow and bulbous. As she smoked a thin-stemmed, brass-bowled pipe, she swept her fruit with an alluring wave of a feather duster.

We later learned these people had come to call us as we went by: "the two who walk hand in hand——"

One evening, strolling down a street new to our steps, we found two ancient stone lions guarding a temple. These mythical creatures, like distorted, maniacal dogs, are demon chasers. The male rears his head with a toss of disdain and rolls a ball playfully under his paw. The female, more deadly of the species as to expression, grins in a manner far from maternal as she holds a wriggling cub firmly planted under her foot. She is presumed to be feeding him, since these magical animals exude milk from their paws. But it must be that she tramples too hard, for the offspring, lifting four pathetic feet in the air, seems about to give up the last breath with an agonized squeal.

Beyond these guardians—ineffectual now—was a closed gate. A lane at the side led by a bell tower. The timbers were crumbling, warped and weather-beaten, yet the structure had a wistful beauty of past perfection, and one wind bell still swung from a jutting eave. The walled pathway we followed led us to an open square. There stood a communal well where children tugged up buckets of brackish water. Through the trees we glimpsed the façade of Eastern screen work, the graceful, tiled roofs of a temple.

Forgotten was this place of worship. Between the roof tiles wild wheat grew. Broken was the lattice of exquisite carving. Peering through the crannies into the darkened spaces we saw that an even darker Buddha loomed. The ineffable peace of deserted places was in the very air, stilled to sweet warmth. An aroma, as of past vows, past tears, distilled to subtle atmosphere enfolded the temple, making it seem unreal, like some fabled vision seen in a far mirage.

Here in the silent court, tablets were reared on dragon backs. To our minds, these groveling creatures of scaled shells were tortoises, but by courtesy, dragons to the Oriental, for whom the designation of turtle is an epithet of the worst order. Tablets of

memory were these smooth slabs, with writhing bodies of veritable dragons twisted into a design at the top. They had been placed here by a grateful sovereign to advise the gods that a victory had attended his banners.

A huge bronze bell, man-high, lay muted on the ground of the courtyard. Such a bell used to be tolled a thousand times to ease the way of an Empress through purgatory. Now it gave a deadened but faintly sweet response to a tap of ours. The tone was wafted like a lingering prayer, invoked, but dimly uttered.

In the clinging shadows of evening this temple seemed to be more a place of worship and of reverence, of mystic communion, than all the garish shrines encountered on our wanderings. If man had forgotten this temple, the gods had not.

CHAPTER IX

THE PURPLE FORBIDDEN CITY

In the heart of the walled Tartar City of Peking, mapped by Kublai Khan, lies enclosed the Imperial City. Within this Imperial City of the nobles, the citadel of Manchu power, like the kernel of a nut, enfolded by walls of dragon tile, is the Forbidden City, sacred precincts of the Son of Heaven. Sacrosanct to the dwellings of Emperors for more than a thousand years, the Chinese counted it the center of the earth. They called it "myrtle red" or purple, from a learned if obscure allusion to the Polar Star, pivotal point of their celestial world.

On the day of the Republic, this tenth of October, anniversary of the time thirteen years ago when the monarchy was overthrown, we drove under triumphal arches hideous with violent, paper roses, through bannered streets.

From this world of tumult, of darting rickshaws, of hawkers' cries, from the repulsive and tawdry imitation of splendor, we passed through a magical gate.

This imperial yellow portal, Hsi Hua Mên, opened to a city of dreams made tangible, incredibly exquisite, fantastically marvelous.

A canal sluggishly meanders through the gardens, spanned by a score of bridges of ivory-tinted marble. Above the trees jut yellow-tiled pavilion towers. Ragged hedges of arbor-vitæ fringe deserted, twisting walks. We crossed a bridge of singing dogs.

"Eeee," sang one foolish dog atop his pedestal. "Oww!" yelped a second, rigid stacatto pain stamped on his face. "Aiiii," we seemed to hear a third, his tongue posed in this uncomfortable attitude. Reminiscent of the gamut of Chinese bells tapped in succession, one tone blending chime-like with the next, their sculptured semblance of sound actually appeared to produce a din that struck the ears.

A collection—world famous—of palace treasures is displayed in a near building. A hundred days would scarcely be enough to satisfy the eyes, so precious are these bits of craftsmanship, seemingly too rare to be the work of man. Crowded in one pavilion is cloisonné. Opposite are displayed antique bronzes. The audience hall in the center holds the greatest wonders. all of Chinese fabrication, amassed by China's rulers. Vases there are of *sang de boeuf,* the red that is like

THE BRIDGE OF SINGING DOGS.

living blood and which legend tells was first achieved by the sacrifice of the artist's life; the cool, glistening sheen of *clair de lune; flœmbé,* veined by fire; the faint, translucent gleam of celadon.

We found utensils once used in the palaces, ceremonial robes and brocaded cushions of the throne. Altar offerings. Gods of jade—milky jade worth the price of many kingdoms—intricately carved lacquer the color of cinnabar.

Cold as polar gloom was the icy region of this hall. Our feet, tramping over the stone floor, congealed. At intervals we rested eyes surfeited with splendor and warmed feet frozen to insensibility by ducking under the ropes placed to guide our passage through the maze of treasures and crawled out to the sun. Our conduct was not in accord with the principles of the museum guard. He disapproved of this flitting in and out. He objected particularly to our sitting on the doorstep. A police officer in baggy black uniform was immediately and ostentatiously detailed to pace back and forth near us. Marching in squeaky, iron-soled shoes, dragging a dejected musket along, he somberly surveyed us and censured conduct so unusual.

Leaving the museum, incontestibly glorious with the perfection of minute objects, we came upon the

magnificent assemblage of buildings known as the Forbidden City. From the boscage of the outer fringe of gardens, we passed to the central palace buildings, yellow, curving roofs clashing in barbaric joy against a sky of vivid cobalt. The Mings' ideal of magnificence was this city, created by Yung Lo in the fifteenth century. It has scarcely been changed in the passing of years for his successors realized that this conception of a royal habitation could not be excelled.

From the outer portal of Ch'ien Mên, which was the sovereign's entrance to Peking itself, countless gates open always to greater grandeur. The Portal of Mid-day, where courtiers of the lowest rank might make obeisance; Tien An Mên, flanked by winged dragon pillars of victory; finally the Portal of Greatest Harmony, opening to the splendid court of honor.

Vast is this stupendous court where a large army might be marshaled. An open space, broad as a plain, is encompassed by low buildings, roofs flashing in the sun. Like pigmies, lost in infinity, we crossed the great expanse.

Beyond, balustrades of sun-warmed marble lead to intricate, wandering ramifications of the palaces.

YELLOW, CURVED ROOFS AND BALUSTRADES OF SUN-WARMED MARBLE—THE MINGS' IDEAL OF MAGNIFICENCE.

Each pillar is sculptured with the phoenix, the love pigeon, emblem of the Empress, or the dragon, symbol of all royalty. A bewildering effect of magnificence is given by these paths and balconies that led, some to the apartments of the concubines, others to the dwellings of princes of the blood or to the quarters of the entourage, the innumerable satellites once necessary to the panoply of an Emperor.

Weeds now push up between the slabs of marble pavement. The lacquer has tarnished. An aching pity is engendered by this neglect. A vision involuntarily comes of Manchu splendor under the Empire, the gleaming rainbow robes of the officials with the jeweled button of their rank in their caps; the mace of office, jade or coral; the scintillation of unparalleled brilliance as they paid homage to the Emperor.

The last great throne room was where the Emperor held audience on the sublime and magnificent occasion of his birthday. It is elevated high on a platform of marble. Incense burners of bronze are placed at intervals on the flight of steps leading up to it. One can visualize the smoke in spirals winging through the clear air, as well as the softly breathed adulation of his subjects, ascending to the Son of Heaven.

In the center of these steps to the throne is a dragon carved slab of marble, the spirit staircase. Sacred to the passage of benign spirits, it was untrod by man. This day of the celebration as we watched, a soldier of the Republic emphasized his independence from old reverence, by casting down a protecting barrier of wire and trampling up the marble carving with insolent boots.

This last throne room is of lacquered copper gold. Where once an Emperor's voice echoed from the seat of state, now the throne of the Ch'ings is dimmed by sifting dust. Beyond, hidden by high walls, exists Hsuan Tung, last of his line, the puppet Emperor, surrounded by his court.

In curious contradictory fashion, habitual to the race, the Chinese celebrated the dawn of their Republic and at the same time suffered the representative of Manchu power to dwell unmolested, even protected, in the heart of the capital city. Because the government feared to offend the powerful tribes of the hinterland, two million dollars a year were granted for the Emperor's revenue. The bannermen, the Manchu nobles, had scarcely modified their arrogance with the poverty of their reduced condition. Hoping that this is only an interim, they kept the faith.

At the rear entrance of the Forbidden City, a file of green-paneled carriages always waited. Horses were tethered in a sheltered space, for sessions were long. Manchu nobles entered the presence of their liege, harkened to his edicts, obeyed orders stamped with the Imperial Seal, quite as if Hsuan Tung had authority to govern the populace of millions.

We came again to the palaces, just one month later. Deserted were the precincts, save for the officials of a new government who catalogued the treasures of the state and of the throne. The Emperor, now designated as Mr. Henry Pu Yi, had been ordered from the premises with his wife and concubines. Abandoning their possessions, in the compulsory flight, they had been routed from the last corner of their rightful Empire.

Thus dwindled and died the power of rulers, once great enough to conjure this marvel from the marshland as a genie might wave a city into being with his wand. Like kings who walked through the tales of a magician's fantasy were these men who lived in this walled domain. We know from their bland edicts, or from the reproofs issued to them by courageous censors, as well as from the sweet-tongued, conventional

historians, something of their lives and loves. But all the mystery of the palaces cannot be gleaned. Much we shall never know, can never guess of the wonder and the terror, the exultation and the madness of centuries in the city called Forbidden.

CHAPTER X

THE SEA PALACES OF TZU HSI

An Imperial highway divides the Forbidden City from the group of buildings and gardens known as the Sea Palaces. Across this road where camels stalk in sulky dignity, juts the eminence of Coal Hill. An artificial mound, the piled-up residue of three lakes which were drained from the marshes, it takes its name from the coal that was supposedly stored here by early Emperors providing against a siege. Now it is covered with gardens, and pavilions of bright lacquer dot the slopes.

Here the last of the Ming Emperors, after massacring his concubines, maniacally dismembering his daughters, watched the burning of Peking by rebel troops. Testing the will of the gods by the laws of chance, he shook a box containing three bamboo sticks. If the longest fell, he would meet the enemy in battle; the second indicated that he would await his fate in the palace. But the third and shortest dropped to the ground. Obeying the mandate from on high,

he made a noose of silken cord and hanged himself from the rafters of his pleasure house.

Directed by a Chinese guard with many medals insecurely fastened to his chest by safety pins, we explored these gardens of the northern lake. A twisted marble bridge spanned blue water where sedges rustled in the wind. Beyond towered a sharp hill and the pointed pinnacle of the Dagoba. A lotus bud, this curious monument has been called, and the simile is so apt that it drives any other comparison from the mind. A bud lifted in the clarity of an indigo sky.

This repetition of the sky's blueness, the bell-like quality of the ambient air, never seems monotonous to one who has known the perfection of these unending, cloudless days. All autumn we had seen but an hour of rain. Fortunately enough—for that brief shower turned our courtyard into a pool. The Boy struggled out, robe hitched around his waist revealing trousers of purple satin. Bent double he wielded a stubby Chinese broom and swept the water into our flower beds. The rain over, the pavement had dried in surprisingly few minutes. Since that time gray dawns had brightened to vivid mornings; clouds had been driven seaward by the eternal wind.

To-day, if comparison could be made of beatific

days, was the most flawless. Still crisply cold in the shadows, the sun was warm with honey sweetness. We climbed the hill and from the Dagoba looked down over the pleasure grounds of Emperors. Three lakes, the color of melted sapphire, lay in the ragged willow fringes of a vast forest. Imperial roofs, row after row of chrome yellow, glistened amid the trees. Between the north lake and the south, above the lotus pads, stretched the dazzling Bridge of Rainbow Jade, so called because it resembles the translucent, creamy shadow of that most precious stone.

On the crest of this hill stands the temple of a many-headed, many-legged Buddha, demoniacal fury depicted on his face. He grasps varied emblems in his sixteen arms and with an equal number of feet stamps violently on prostrate bodies representing heretical sects.

Directly behind is the white cone of the Dagoba. This stupendous towering mass, the Pai T'a, is built in five tapering sections to symbolize the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. It is a part of that vastly elaborate system of religion brought overland centuries ago from India, through Thibet by the influence of the Lamas, always powerful at court. Unlike other parts of China, the Buddhas of Peking

have a trace of Hindu physiognomy, an exotic quality; in addition there is a cruelty directly traceable to the crude Thibetan conceptions of worship.

From this summit, these gardens where peonies, most favored flower of royalty, once bloomed in profusion, the soldier led us down through devious caverned passages that honey-combed the hill. By irregular, rock-hewn steps, we groped our way in utter darkness. Cool, they must have been, these retreats from sultry summer afternoons, when the light at the opening of an occasional grotto infiltrated dimly as if the sun were seeking the depths of the sea.

Some fleeing monarch stumbling through this inky blackness, may have madly sped his way; or eunuchs may have lurked in these caves to torture an enemy too menacing to be killed by less cruel means. All this of terror and of shuddering fear still permeates these long subterranean ways.

Stepping again into the morning light we saw a palace with rambling, covered balconies, gay painted rooms, decorated with joyous flowers. The façade, carved and tinted, curved along the lake, close to the water's edge, overlooking this stretch of Northern Sea and far green shores tipped with the ochre roofs of temples.

Desolate now, with a sudden tranquillity, these palaces are but shadows of great memories. It is said that they are haunted. Tenanted by wistful ghosts who "swallowed the gold", preferring poison to the hardship of their lot. Visited also by the souls of young girls who threw themselves down some palace well and who still lurk at the place of their death, unreleased for their journey to Purgatory until they can entice a mortal to sever his life's strand. Invaded by other tormented spirits swiftly killed by the caprice of a ruler.

Under the régime of the Manchus, on the fifteenth day of the Seventh Moon, the Festival of the Dead, lanterns the shape of lotus buds were set afloat on these lakes. The flickering beams were to guide departed souls to the offerings of propitiation that had been prepared for them. Thus according to the custom of her ancestors, Tsu Hsi, the Empress Dowager, appeased the dead, burning incense for the lonely ghosts who had no surviving son to help them with prayers on their way to the Nine Springs.

But the old Empress did not believe in the whispered tales of phantoms at the Sea Palaces, those shapes that appeared wisp-like out of the mists of evening and then vanished. She, who had the murder of the Pearl

Concubine on her hands, with a host of other crimes as heinous burdening her hardened conscience, refused credence to such superstitions. Visions that could not be ignored she claimed were foxes who had probably lived there for thousands of years and could at will take any form or substance. They were sacred foxes, she insisted, and would do no harm. A delectable bit of Tzu Hsi's philosophy!

Many legends, fantastic or substantiated, were woven about the dominant personality of the Empress Dowager. All authorities agree in acclaiming this ruler as a remarkable woman; although more noted for her extreme skill in keeping and consolidating her position than for any constructive work accomplished during her reign.

She was of the clan of Yehonala. Sent according to Manchu custom to the Forbidden City, she became a concubine of the second rank to the Emperor Hsien Feng. First as the favored wife of the Emperor, then as the mother of his only son, her position became immeasurably strengthened. At the death of Hsien Feng, when a frightened court fleeing from foreign armies had taken refuge at Jehol, she escaped the end destined for her by powerful enemies. She assumed the virtual power of the government. At the begin-

ning, reigning with her co-Regent, Tzu An, Consort of Hsien Feng, known as Dowager Empress of the East, she was content to issue mandates from behind the Yellow Curtain that veiled the woman ruler. She was dictator during the minority of her son, Tung Ch'ih, clasping all the while more power in her avid fingers. Fearing that the rule of her son would jeopardize her own control, she encouraged him in excesses until she brought about his early death. Still eager to retain her prestige, she caused another infant, her nephew, to be chosen for the throne and she continued her rôle of Empress Dowager.

Such was Old Buddha, the Great Ancestor, as she liked to be called. The contradictory aspects of her character are innumerable—and always fascinating.

On her birthday she bought ten thousand birds to set them free. From her book of propitious omens, she would select a lucky hour. She was borne in her yellow palanquin up to a temple at the top of a hill. Eunuchs followed with the songsters in their cages, osier woven. At the shrine, Old Buddha burned sandalwood and prayed to the gods that these birds should not again be trapped. She opened the doors of the fragile prisons. Out swarmed the birds.

The Princess Der Ling, who viewed the court from

the vantage point of lady-in-waiting, recounts the ritual of this meritorious act. Her account derives an added piquancy from her admission that these poor creatures were snared again at the foot of the templed hill by eunuchs who sold them for their own profit. Always, each year, a few parrots refused to escape and remained on their perches, cocking a beady eye at the proceedings. "They do not wish to fly away," the eunuchs told the Empress Dowager. "Knowing Your Majesty's great bounty, they prefer to stay forever at your side."

But the servants neglected to mention the fact that the aforesaid parrots had been taken to the hill every afternoon for weeks and trained for their rôle in the spectacle.

Contrasting with her clemency in freeing the birds, Tzu Hsi kept her nephew Kuang Hsu in a captivity diabolically cruel, under her strict surveillance. Never for a day could he escape from her side, even when it was his duty to make sacrifice at the altar of the gods. Dying from poison administered by the aged Empress in slow doses so that he should not survive her, he miserably lingered. Such was the captivity of Kuang Hsu—set free by death, only one day before Old Buddha died on the throne that was his by right.

By the Houses of the Dead, Musicians Played a Wailing Dirge.

In this domain so vividly her own, Tzu Hsi lives for us again. Her barges were propelled over the lotus-petalled surface of these lakes. She so loved the excursions that more than once during the Boxer uprising she stopped the bombardment of the Legations in order that her pleasure might not be marred by the sound of firing.

Here was her theater; the loge to which she retired for a siesta during the interminable performances of her players. Here, too, was her bedroom, which a whim caused to be refurnished and changed from pink of her preference to the blue she detested, before the desecrating eye of the Foreigner might behold her sanctuary. When she was ill she reposed on her great bed of multitudinous coverlets and, her hand outstretched on a pillow, permitted a succession of physicians to take her pulse. Each in turn prescribed for her. She read over the medicines they recommended, chose the one that suited her fancy. The favored doctor was then ordered to swallow a portion of his own dose before the Empress deigned to try his physic.

Illuminating, not only of her character, but of the customs still tenacious at court are these glimpses of Tzu Hsi. For instance, the Empress never went a step outside the palace unless eunuchs followed with

sweetmeats and a stove to brew her tea. Also they carried a sheaf containing bamboo sticks. At trying moments the Empress commanded the rods to be given to her court ladies that they might beat these irritating menials. On the fifth day of the Fifth Moon, which is the most poisonous hour of all poisonous insects, she took a small cup of wine combined with a yellow powder like sulphur. With a brush dipped in this mixture, she dabbed each of her ladies-in-waiting under the nose and behind the ears to prevent their being bitten during the approaching summer.

This was the woman who dominated China for nearly fifty years. At the death of Tzu Hsi, the Empire already crumbling, disintegrated into its monstrous parts. A shifting of scenes and personalities; ambitions, mounting flame-like, only to be devoured by the fire of a still mightier ambition; quarrels, culminating in civil strife—this was the heritage she left that day in 1908. For then, arrayed in robes of state, on her throne, she gave audience to the high priest of Thibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama. She spoke to him; her head fell forward—— She had "ascended the Dragon", departed to seek the shades of her ancestors.

CHAPTER XI

IN A CHINESE COURTYARD

SECLUDED was our court, barred by many doors, surrounded by high walls. A neighbor's tree drooped in friendly fashion over this barricade, giving us grateful shadows and sometimes a whirling flurry of leaves, brittle as crackling shells. We could see only a patch of glorious azure—and, far above us, birds, great flocks of them, wings flashing silver as they turned in the sun, wheeling, eddying for long moments before darting away like streaks of white flame. A wailing, plaintive sound, shrilling to an insistent siren, tingling like the notes of a tuning fork came from the sky. For these were temple pigeons—and whistles were fastened to their wings!

The isolation of our court was broken but once, when a rook perched in the tree dropped, inadvertently to be sure, a ripe crab-apple which fell to pieces at our feet.

Yet this cloistral seclusion gave no hint of loneliness. Lifting above the gray, curved roofs of our

dwelling came the multitudinous sounds of the city, blending to an erratic symphony. Voices penetrated, a wind-blown song; the vendor whose call was for an instant like a bar from Pagliacci, before it drooped to a minor, discordant note; the cry of the coolie woman who gathered scraps of paper for the dust heap; the whine of a beggar that crawled through the lane imploring alms.

We learned to distinguish the calls. The seller of coolie cloth, twirling his miniature drum of snake skin, had certain rhythmic strokes. He was not to be confounded with the discreet yet insistent tap, tap, tap of the buyer of old clothes whose tiny mallet clicked a thin disk of wood.

The itinerant barber proclaimed his passage by a prolonged whanging of great metal clippers, not unlike a monotone of some monster jew's-harp. Lacquer chests of utensils swung from a pole across his shoulders; scissors and hairbrushes dangled as he walked. Putting down one of these chests as a stool for the client, bringing out a brass bowl that rested on a charcoal brazier, he washed, shaved and braided the heads of the gatekeepers of our vicinity.

The knife sharpener had a long trumpet which he blew with a peculiarly raucous note. He used no

wheel, but a stone slab on a carpenter's bench. Crumbling yellow earth over the dampened surface, he adjusted the knife in a wooden holder. Sitting astride the bench, he vigorously rubbed the blade up and down.

Once when our kitchen implements needed a keener edge and we listened for his horn, up flared a snatch of melody weirdly enticing as the song of the Piper of Hamlin town. It was not the knife grinder; neither was it a conjurer to rid us of scurrying rodents that pattered audibly above our paper ceiling. Instead, there stopped at our gate a man with a peregrinating circus of mice. Holding up a piece of silver, we induced him to stay. Before a quickly gathered audience of children who wriggled with him through our doors, he took his trained mites from their boxes. One, at desperate pace, ran around and around on a revolving platform. Spinning like a top it went, giddily urged by a poke of a bamboo stick. Tiny white mice climbed up and down ladders, scampered through holes in cockle shells, dashed perilously up slender poles. One creature hung dizzily by its hind feet and pulled up a weighted string with its front paws.

The performance finished, the trainer stopped each mouse with a final pat and slipped it back to a box

with a guerdon of parched corn. Away the man went, piping, calling after him the children—and all those with the hearts of children.

Above all the sounds of the city came a strange dissonance. For three days there beat upon our consciousness a wailing dirge of fifes and two-stringed fiddles, a barbaric sound, quavering to melody, straggling to discord. The irregular throb of a drum struck with insistent force.

Beyond our walls a man lay dead. Passing the house we had seen servants, the white chrysanthemum of grief stuck in their jackets, bringing tea to the musicians stationed in the street. Tables were spread with cloths, flower-embroidered; viands were offered the guests, the same baked funeral meats that custom had decreed for the past thousand years.

All night, like the plaint of a soul in pain, had risen the chanting of Lama priests, aiding the newly released spirit on its perilous journey to the Nine Springs. The voices lulled to a drowsing lethargy, overcome by sleep, forgetful of the vast oblivion that stifles life. Then louder, more strident, they battled with the cohorts struggling for the soul. Shrieking in an excess of angry rage, they fought to exorcise the lurking devils, those phantomesque demons that

stalk the path of the shade in that dreary afterworld. Desperately they hurled defiance at the powers of darkness. Terror, eerie, weird notes of fear, jaggedly pierced the night. . . . More was at stake than the soul of the man, immobile in the coffin of catalpa wood. They wrestled, each for his own soul, each crying out in protest at the immutable laws of death.

The third day, the low lugubrious moan of horns blown at uncertain intervals brought us from the court. Before us wended the funeral procession, on its way to the far An Ting Gate and the barren fields beyond. Beggars, in ceremonial raiment, bore great lanterns. Others balanced effigies to be burned: a retinue of life-sized, paper dummies supposed to attend the deceased as servants in the next world—plainly relics of days when concubines were slain and menials interred with the dead. Houses followed, for the spirit's habitation. They were atrocities of red and green paper on split bamboo framework, strangely enough constructed after a hideous foreign model, with gables superimposed on tottering stories, flimsy, shuttered windows and balconies. Even grass was painted with care; sheep dotted the lawn in front of the house, frolicking in attitudes of bucolic abandon. . . .

Borne by twenty coolies the huge catafalque slowly passed. Peking carts, blue hooded, festooned with silver tinsel offerings, held the relatives, impassively staring with the fixed rigidity of puppets. Men in white robes of mourning followed; more costumed attendants threw disks of spirit money into the air to appease the demons. These bits of white *sycee* glinted for an instant in the sun, then fluttered to the road. In the rear, a throng of rag pickers, a motley, evil crew, pounced on the paper and thrust it into their nets.

Now a great stillness: the cortège had passed.

Back in our courtyard, we drowsed in the sun. All-pervading happiness, content to a beatific degree, we knew in these long mornings of indolence.

A flower vendor came. Before us he displayed his potted plants, China asters, newly budded chrysanthemums and a variety of others. We bargained through the medium of the Boy and, for twenty coppers, possessed a Jerusalem cherry tree, shiny green leaves and tawny balled fruit.

It became painfully evident after the passage of several hours that my purchase was beginning to die. This was not due, I discovered, to any aversion to the environment, but because the Chinese have a well-

The Flower Vendor.

established custom of selling plants without roots. Thus my specimen withered while new plants were grown some miles distant on the roots to which I was entitled.

Then the cook, wild-eyed and panting, dashed in, market basket over one arm, a bunch of pancakes big as bath rugs, thin, doughy and scorched folded under the other. His own chow—levied from the allowance meted for the day. Nor was he content with this slight tribute——

Depredations were constant in our kitchen. Sacks of flour were suddenly reduced to half their dimensions, sugar oozed away as if by black magic. Tins of cocoa, jars of bacon, once opened dribbled by imperceptible gradations, but decidedly more quickly than our use could legitimately account for. A fresh tin would be whisked out of sight in a flashing wink of the eye—never to be recovered. Blank protestations on the part of Lo, feints of misunderstanding from Han who scurried around to bring me every irrelevant thing but the article which I endeavored to trace. These commodities were sold back to the grocers who have a system of returns convenient for cooks. Cigarettes, too, had a propensity for mysteriously dwindling. Han, smoking a cork-tipped Melachrino, thrust

it still ignited into his chest, suffering the pangs of the Spartan child from motives less worthy.

The Chinese psychology does not label these acquisitions as theft. Stealing is a graver matter. These slight but perpetual requisitions they consider their due. "Squeeze" is that illicit commission they require on every transaction. It is universally practiced throughout the land from the highest official to the lowest coolie. With the servants this harvest of coppers, unceasingly extorted from every source, soon is transmuted into pieces of silver.

A merchant apologetically refused to send me a bolt of silk because he would have to pay a tax on every yard before my servants would admit it—even though the piece merely came for my approval. The horticultural department of a university that contracted to supply fresh plants through the winter stipulated that they would discontinue the service if the flowers were allowed to freeze or were killed with salt water because they had not paid sufficient "squeeze" to the servants.

Because the worst plunder occurred in the kitchen, we bought a kitchen god. A squat-nosed deity of paper, he was delegated to watch over the destinies of the hearth for the remainder of the season. He was

not efficacious in controlling the accounts. But at New Year's time when this little godling was burned and ascended in flame to heaven to make his report to higher gods, we hoped he would tell of our patience and denounce the errors of the domestics. Still it is hard to know—for just as he makes the journey to paradise, it is the custom to smear his lips with honey so that he may speak only sweet words. . . . About that time I noted that my supply of honey was entirely depleted.

In his bills Lo endeavored to imitate my handwriting, his t's trying sturdily to follow the dashing strokes of my flying pencil. There was a chasm of misunderstanding between my daily orders and his execution of them until I adopted his nomenclature. "Long" beans were of the string variety; "short" beans were limas; ham was to be designated as "pork ham"; the icing of a cake was called the "topside". These reasonable changes fixed in my mind, there was no further trouble—except when he indulged in an orgie of buying cooking utensils without permission or added the date, 1924, to the column of my indebtedness, making a staggering total.

Those early days—when we relied for many comforts on their errands—developed in Han and Lo a

sense of authority hard to suppress. Han disappeared for long intervals and returned, jumping from the rickshaw like a lord. One morning, after an indefinite absence, he presented us with two door mats and a pair of fly swatters. The latter appeared to be only ornamental contrivances to waft the pests from one place to another. Still true to Buddhist precepts, Han refused to take life, believing that every fly was a human soul degraded to punishment and knowing that he would be reduced to that same state in his next incarnation if he released the spirit. Even when we opened a suitcase and out swarmed millions of mosquitoes, a brood that some hibernating mother had brought to maturity in the dark recesses, he only sent them gently from room to room. Ours were the acrobatic feats that finally exterminated them.

In spite of the uselessness of his purchases we accepted and paid for most of them. Ire flared, however, when he brought home black and Roman striped bed coverings and a bill of heroic proportions. Nor did we sanction the ton of coal that drove up; nor the carved mah jong racks he contributed—for a price. With the peddlers he introduced, bringing neatly tied bundles, we regretted the necessity for discipline. For they had brocades stiffened with gold, lighting our

room like the flash of a sunbeam; silks of flaunting imperial yellow that the eye coveted; or the famous old design of a thousand babies; embroideries that shimmered like the gems of old Tzu Hsi.

Han, watching our expressions to see how the sales progressed, invariably picked up Jim's photograph and turning to me with an ingratiating smile, remarked: "Master very pretty man." Then, as a pensive addition: "Master, he very kind."

After the bustle of a confusing day our courtyard lapsed into quiet at twilight. The sewing amah folded away her materials with meticulous care that left no escaping pin or thread. Tottering on bound feet that are given the precious title of Golden Lilies, she made obeisance, signifying that her day's service was finished. A high, squeaking voice uttered her good-by.

The staff of two, with which we had begun our establishment, had multiplied to seven. Han explained glibly: "Number One Boy, he talk English and sign chit." So he had demanded a coolie to do most of his work. Lo acquired a second cook who served his apprenticeship at small pay, doing scullery work and then progressing to roast and bake under Lo's instruction. Two rickshaw Boys lounging out-

side the gate perpetually waiting for us to emerge, had become an integral part of the household. So they gathered, pleasantly passing their days, smoking, quarreling and eating long strands of macaroni as they crouched on their haunches before the kitchen stove. Now through the dusk we heard a stealthy clicking of mah jong tiles from the quarters in the rear.

The light from our latticed windows fell athwart the courtyard wall. We went inside.

Sheltered by our high compound walls, we drew close to the fire, shutting away the grim night. Outside, the mysterious, brooding silence was rent by a church bell of clangorous tin—feeble, inadequate to stir to response the vast inertia of the Celestial. The strokes fell harshly on the ear, quavered till the vibrations were smothered by stagnant air.

Silence, this heavy, pregnant stillness enveloped us. Then to our sanctuary penetrated the voice that is China: the voice no walls can bar. The moans of a beggar, strangled cries, the gibbering horror of a mendicant's call. Deceitfully plaintive, yet possibly the call of true anguish—— As the man shambled along through the night came the wail:

"*Lao yeh Tai-Tai*—— A few coppers! About

me is plenty, yet my rice bowl is bare. I am desolate and alone. Within me hunger rages. My heart eats the great bitterness. Thrice honorable Master! Only a few coppers!"

CHAPTER XII

TEMPLED PARADISE

THE Emperor of China, being of a tolerant mind, was not only the head of the accepted worship of state, Confucianism, but also nominally the chief of Buddhism and Taoism. These faiths abide peacefully in the land, inextricably woven in the minds of the people. One individual may be at the same time an active devotee of all three sects. It has been said that Buddhism swallowed Taoism, Taoism swallowed Confucianism, but that finally the latter swallowed both Buddhism and Taoism.

Confucianism is the cult of the literati, of the mandarins who order their lives by the "Analects". Laws that direct the state and the family are here codified. They govern the minutiae of the ceremonials that give to Chinese life its ordered dignity and repose.

The Confucian Temple, the Ta Ch'eng Miao, stands at the north of the city. Wandering one autumn morning in that direction, we came upon it, rigidly, coldly beautiful. Serenity, simplicity were here made

tangible—like the severe code of the Sage who gathered the precepts of countless years and bound them together in the form of absolute laws.

Burnished were the roofs of these temples. In this land of omnipresent dirt, the courts were swept with astonishing neatness. Giant cypress trees, their great trunks twisted and gnarled, bearing the burden of thousands of years, formed an avenue that led to the great Altar. On either side were pavilions with marble slabs, dragon wreathed. These tablets recorded the conquests of Emperors. With the red banners of decisive victory they had offered these memorials to Confucius.

Doves fluttered to the smooth pavement, doves cooed in the temple eaves, or alighted on the walls of dim rose stucco, imparting an added note of peace to the all-pervading harmony. The spirit stairway of white marble, carved with dragons and phoenix in the water and clouds of their respective elements, slanted up to the main altar. It had been fashioned for the ascent of the good spirits who cannot enter by the steps built for human feet. A great rectangular shrine, roofed with the yellow tile that denoted Imperial protection, glinted in the sun.

This "Hall of Great Perfection" was newly gar-

A Stairway of Carved Dragons and Phoenix.

nished. When the President of the Republic, Yuan Shih-k'ai, regarded the possibilities of his office as a step towards the throne, he came here to make sacrifice to the tutelary shades. Legend says that the golden carp in the pool died; the blossoms shriveled, because of the sacrilege. Yet some eerie sense of suspended time, like a wizard's spell over the quiet place, convinced us that the flowers would revive, the carp magically reappear, should an Emperor of the Manchu line, a descendant of the great Nurhachi, come again to offer his homage.

The interior of this hall is exquisitely proportioned, reflecting the repose and unity of the outer court. A great austerity—bare walls, a vast stretch of floor. There is one red tablet lettered in gold, dedicated to Confucius. Four smaller tablets represent the spirits of his four principal disciples.

No priests are here to minister to the superstitions of the people; no idols to besiege with prayers. The simple rites are but ancestor worship. In the second month of spring and the second month of autumn sacrifices are made to Confucius. Officials bow before the tablet of the Sage and burn incense. Musicians, garbed in a replica of the sapphire costume of the Ming dynasty, play a still more ancient music of

twenty centuries ago and sing hymns praising Confucius, which are known as the "Odes to Peace."

The tenets given by the "Teacher of Ten Thousand Ages" have markedly impressed the Chinese race. He and his followers left no aspect of life untouched by the rules of conduct, recorded in the "Four Books" and the "Five Classics." Honesty, integrity, diligence —indeed, most of the Celestial's worthy qualities— may be attributed to his influence.

Much harm, however, has been disseminated, for the Chinese have kept doggedly to the letter of the law Confucius gave. By placing filial piety as the first of the five relations man must fulfill on this earth, the respect due to parents was intensified. Consider the result: the only hope of immortality rested upon begetting endless children in an already cruelly overpopulated land, condemning them to a ruthless struggle for existence in order that a parent's spirit tablet might receive proper homage. This excessive worship of progenitors obviously has hampered progress. In a country where it is sacrilege to improve on the customs and habits of one's ancestors, the people naturally look with suspicion on any innovation and absolutely reject improvement unless it is forced upon them.

But the pristine severity of these old moral and ethical rules, gathered by Confucius from ancient sources, these rites and ceremonies so studiously observed, have given the Chinese more than a veneer of formal courtesy. The requirements are for the most part practical. After filial piety, Confucius admonished harmony between brothers, concord among neighbors, peace between husband and wife.

Other aspects of life were directed by these rules of the Sage. Understanding the value of husbandry, the Chinese have ranked the farmer after the scholar and before the merchant and artisan. To elevate the dignity of field labor, a ceremony, originating in prehistoric times and brought to a renaissance by Confucius, was performed each spring. The Emperor wielding a plow of yellow wood traced a furrow in an open space near the Temple of Agriculture. Princes of the Blood followed with the red plows of their rank; then Ministers of the Empire. Throughout the land, officials performed this ceremony. Obeying a similar exhortation of the Sage, and to set an example of diligence, the Empress cared for silk worms, watched the eggs, waited for them to be hatched. She gathered mulberry leaves to feed them, guarded them until they

began to spin. Finally she wove the spun silk on her looms.

We left this temple dedicated to the honor of the great Teacher. Just beyond a glorious, three-arched *p'ai lou* of gold and green stood the Hall of Classics. It was a building with a double roof of yellow tiles surmounted by a gilded dome. Balustrades of intricately carved marble surrounded the edifice. A cloistered garden now was desolate.

In this Hall the Emperor expounded the Classics.

The highest official positions of the Empire were allotted to the winning competitors in the literary examinations. Not a basis of practical knowledge, but the ability to excel in the classics ranked a man among the elect. Thousands attempted the first degrees. Those who had proved their learning was of a high order received the baccalaureate degree of *Hsiu-ts'ai,* or Flourishing Talent, subsequently the master's degree, *Chu-jen,* Selected Man. The successful ones became candidates for the third degree, the *Chin-Shih,* analogous to our doctorate. Finally these doctors, the flower of China's scholars, once in three years were examined in the presence of the Emperor. The trial is known as *Han lin,* the Forest of Pencils. The

rewards, appointment to exalted office, were then bestowed.

Confucius stressed the honor due to a scholar. The one son of a large family who happened to be a literatus had no need to toil with the others. He was given absolute leisure and accorded better clothes than his brothers, because of the reflected glory he brought to his kin.

To point the moral and adorn his maxims, Confucius gave illustrations of poor literati of ancient times who had won great renown through their assiduous search for knowledge. Ch'ê yin, who desired to read of an evening and, having no money to provide himself with a lamp, caught fireflies and perused his scrolls by their glow. K'ang, on winter nights, studied by the light reflected from the snow. Another ambitious soul seeing that his neighbor possessed a lamp, bored a hole in the partition wall that he might work by the borrowed light.

Not only great scholars, but other men remarkable for the courage of their convictions were trained by the discipline of this ethical system. The Censors, for example, had the daring to brave the displeasure of a sovereign, calling attention to the defects of his rule, even pointing out errors of his personal conduct.

Often they paid for such rash reproof by death. The Censor Wu K'o-tu, from his exalted sense of duty, deliberately killed himself on the tomb of the Emperor Tung Ch'ih that he might impress on the minds of the people a grievous omission: no successor had been provided to sacrifice to the late Emperor's shade. The effect of his act upon Tzu Hsi, the despotic Empress Dowager, was immediate and salutary. The people saw in him a hero and ranked him with the great figures of legend.

In the tranquillity of these vast courts, it seems as though the ideal of a far world had actually been reached. This quiet haven lies in the midst of a tumultuous city as if to show that peace is perfection and that paradise may be reached on this earth.

Confucius, conforming existence to a rigid mold by his precepts, had no thought of an after world. When questioned on that point he evaded in the habitual Chinese fashion, answering one inquiry by asking another. For he demanded suavely: "When you do not know life, how can you know death?"

Beyond a P'ai Lou of Gold and Green Tile Stood the Hall of Classics.

CHAPTER XIII

TWO JACKET WEATHER

At noon the clear sun was blotted by a strange, far haze. Imperceptibly a yellow pall enveloped the heavens, obscuring the sky, leaving the earth in murky darkness. Moments of stillness, waiting . . . Then, with a scream: wind! Like the genii of some diabolic desert bottle, fierce gusts swept down, tearing the last leaves from the trees, whipping the birds to cover, sending even the beggars crawling to shelter. Faster and in more violent fury came the Yellow Wind, heavy with a sheeting rain of sand from the Gobi Desert.

Soon our courtyard was heaped with piles of this desert silt. Stinging the eyes and throat, sifting into the window crevices, blowing down stove pipes, came the whirling, driving wind, until the tables, the books and the ivory Laughing Buddha were covered with saffron Gobi dust. Day had merged into false night. The candles aflicker in the gloom of our closed house quivered; dim frightened spirits. Like the fangs of

a frenzied wolf, the storm tore and rent and shook the earth in its cyclonic force.

They said the houses were half buried out on the plains; that caravans were swept away by this Yellow Wind. The soothsayers prophesied curious evils after the fury had ceased; possibly fearing that some of the storm devils might linger in the air. Passing, the wind left a cold city, bleak streets, bereft of color.

For some time magpies, taking their flight south in great circling flocks, had rested in our overhanging tree. This was an omen of extreme good fortune, because they are lucky birds, regarded by the Chinese with especial favor. For the magpie is symbolic of marital loyalty, supposedly mating for life. Crying clamorously the birds had blackened every branch of the tree with their closely crowded bodies. Now, hurried by this great wind, they were driven from the skies.

Autumn had officially come. We accepted it irrevocably on the day Han appeared in green padded pants and jacket over which his robe bulged to patriarchal proportions.

Lo manifested his objection to the cold by asking that the cook stove might be removed to his bedroom. Crushed for a time by firm objections to this program,

he seemed to shrivel in despair. Sleeping quarters in China are usually provided with a *k'ang,* or heated platform. On this the whole family repose, desperately hot in the early hours of the night, chilling toward morning as the bricks become icy to the touch. We had no such facilities and did not encourage a room warmed to the point of suffocation, particularly as it would be hermetically sealed, paper pasted over every chink or cranny. Our efforts to regulate such affairs were futile. Despite severe orders both Lo and Han never failed to keep several Chinese stoves at full blast all night long. We explained the dangers verbally, illustrated them in pantomime, supplemented with threats and pleadings. They continued unruffled, not fearing that very common cause of death in China, asphixiation by charcoal fumes.

In the streets, a weird procession of fur caps marked the season. Towering pyramids of nondescript skins added incalculable ferocity to stolid Chinese faces. Beggars, naked limbs plastered with paper, huddled in doorways with outstretched hands. Youths in sheep-lined robes presented a ludicrous profile with a foreign style muffler about the neck, stringy and unkempt, a fringe of vari-colored worsted flapping in the wind. Women contented themselves with

bands of black satin that protected their forehead and drew down over their ears. Rickshaw coolies tied padded mittens to the shafts of their vehicles into which they slipped their hands. But most startling were the motor cars surging down crowded streets at the demoniac rate of fifty and sixty miles an hour, wearing skins of bears and tigers on the hood with the animal's paws outstretched and the head with snarling saber teeth jutting over the radiator.

In the Legation Quarter daily we saw the grenadier-faced wife of the Minister accredited from an impressive Power. Seated in the low barouche, with the coachman towering above on the box in his uniform of green topped with a red mandarin hat, the large lady was swathed in voluminous furs of bastard leopard. Beside the carriage walked the be-costumed footman leading on a leash a scrap of a dog, a white cottony thing wearing a little jacket that had been tailored from the identically same fur—a remnant of the lady's coat.

Shops were too chilled to linger the necessary hours to conclude a bargain. Skating rinks, protected from the wind by matting lifted on poles, sprang into existence. While walking we tucked our hands in our coat cuffs and understood for the first time why

Camels Rested beneath the City Wall, Having Brought Machine Guns from Koupeiku Pass.

the Chinese wear extended sleeves that flap six inches beyond their finger tips.

The morning of October twenty-third the Boy returned to the house in a state of extreme agitation. He had not been able to accomplish his errands. "No can do," he murmured perturbedly, "no can do." Soldiers had driven him from the streets.

Presently we started out to investigate. Troops with drawn bayonets patrolled every corner. The Chinese were turned back but we were allowed to pass unchallenged. The gates of the city were closed. Telegraph and telephone communications were disconnected. Two executions had taken place at dawn and the heads were paraded down Hatamên Street. These men had been petty thieves and their death was ordered as a warning. One had stolen but a morsel of food; the other a coat from a child. Peking was under martial law, actually in a state of siege.

Near the gates, guns, guarded by soldiers, were lined in formidable array. Camels rested by Ch'ien Mên; camels, we were told, that had brought these guns and ammunition from Koupeiku Pass. Barricades of Peking carts were thrown across the streets. A narrow stream of traffic struggling past these impediments was confusedly halted by the police who en-

deavored to scrutinize each blurred, hurrying face to identify some palace traitor. The police obviously had changed their allegiance overnight. For instead of the former faded magenta armbands, they had pinned on their sleeves the colors of the new leader. Scarlet were the ribbons now, with a disk of white emblazoned with ideographs: "Without interfering with the people, die for your country and the people!"

Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang—better known as the Christian General—was in command of the city.

We had followed the maneuvers of Wu Pei-fu, self-styled Defender of Peking, with increasing excitement. A battle raged at Shanhaikwan as the hordes of Chang Tso-lin poured through the Ninth Gate where the Great Wall reaches the sea. During other invasions of China the Wall had acted as a barrier—sometimes ineffectual—against barbarian attacks. Now for its possession two civil factions engaged in internecine struggle.

The massacre had been ghastly. The injured were left to die of rotting wounds. Men were without food; asses and ponies were tearing the flesh of their kind in famished frenzy. For Wu Pei-fu had come no easy victory. Chang Tso-lin was a determined, well-armed foe, not likely to capitulate as did that notable

king of Korea who issued a memorial to the invading conquerors and hoped they were not tired from their long journey.

Wu Pei-fu, losing the battle, needed reinforcements. Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang with forty thousand men was supposed to be proceeding to his aid. Instead, Feng lurked in the mountain passes and then by a remarkable forced march, swung upon Peking and captured the capital.

Marshal Feng, as he declared in a wordy, platitudinous proclamation, had suddenly taken pity on the populace suffering from civil strife. Therefore he had put an end to the war—by the simple expedient of deserting his chief. Chinese insisted that the prediction of local astrologers had been miraculously fulfilled. At the beginning of the struggle soothsayers had prophesied that Peking would be saved by two horses: and the first character of Marshal Feng's name was composed of ideographs that might also be translated to mean those two requisite horses.

Feng, who in the opinion of many oscillated perilously between the titles of traitor and benefactor, blandly assumed the rôle of paternal dictator and called himself the Savior of Peking.

For a short space all was tranquil. The Chinese are

fatalists who believe destiny is mapped in advance, disasters foreshadowed by the calendars of their astrologers. This was the first Year of the Rat and promised to be sufficiently propitious so that they need not worry unduly about any turn of events. Not since the last Year of the Pig, the dread Kuei Hai of 1923, had the mass of the people been tormented by the imminence of evil.

Then events veered. Wu Pei-fu, insane with rage at the defection of Feng, abandoned some of his troops snarled in the battle at Shanhaikwan and with his picked forces, hurriedly entrained for Tientsin. With desperate energy he advanced on Peking. Marshal Feng found it necessary to defend the city he had so debonairly captured.

We saw Feng's troops defile on a chill, clouded morning when whirling clouds of dust were blinding the eyes, whipping the blood. Soldiers crowded from the barracks and commandeered rickshaw men. Sulkily the coolies lined up. One youth who tried to break away was brutally prodded into submission by the butt of a sergeant's gun. Into the rickshaws were piled bales of supplies. Dragging the huge burdens the pullers trudged across the city, harassed by the soldiers, madly anxious to be on the march.

A Triumphal Arch of Hideous Magenta Roses.

Crowds gathered at the roadside and were pressed back by guards. The ponderous, gliding camels again bore their bulky packs. Small donkeys, grain sacks slung over their flanks, trotted in the cavalcade. Men with monstrous bunches of fodder suspended from poles, streamed along, adding to the confusion. A cart broke down, rolling its bundles into the road, impeding the traffic. Through the mêlée official motor cars darted like meteors with tails of choking dust.

The next day the international train with the flags of the British, Americans, Italians, French and Japanese draped over the engine took the last tourists from the city. The fighting lines now crossed the motor road to Tientsin and the sea. Cars, trying to pass, turned back, reporting machine gun fire. Some of the Legations advised their nationals to be ready to take refuge in the Diplomatic Quarter.

The foreigners did not seek this protection. But the Chinese quickly availed themselves of the security this international territory afforded.

Along the road to the Legations rickshaws crowded, bearing huge boxes, brass bound, locked and sealed, with extra precautionary bands of red paper. Driving up to the Wagons-Lits—an erstwhile foreign hotel—came wealthy Chinese in motor cars superintending

the unloading of their treasures. Carriages, wide-windowed coupés of shining green with painted lily panels on the doors were laden with blankets and bird cages.

Through the hotel corridors scampered young girls in pale blue brocaded trousers, flowered satin jackets, their bangs flying in enjoyable agitation. Children played up and down in the elevators, shouting their glee at the contrivance. Grave-faced men with black skull caps congregated in groups to talk. These were merchants, bringing their jade, their pearls and silks —and their women—to the safety of this territory. Or officials of the late government, salvaging their chests of silver *sycee* "squeeze" illicitly gained in all probability. The hotel became so crowded that the go-downs were converted into sleeping quarters. An odor of opium, a faintly sweet, sickish pall permeated the premises.

Peking, however, was not besieged. Wu Pei-fu, weakened and harried on all sides, fled to the sea.

But the fate of Marshal Feng, savior or traitor, had an ironic twist.

One day at Ch'ien Mên station we saw workmen busily building a triumphal arch, decking it with the hideous festoons that are an integral part of every

Chinese celebration. In Marshal Feng's honor they erected this tribute, to mark his victorious return from battle.

But the train arrived unexpectedly early and Marshal Feng in his motor, swiftly sped under the half-constructed arch without even a glance. Nothing daunted, the workmen continued with their garlands of paper roses.

In the newly turned situation, Feng's capture of Peking had not brought him supremacy, but only made him a pawn in the game of a stronger man. Evidently believing discretion to be the better part of valor, he resigned.

The next day Chang Tso-lin from Manchuria, war lord of a copper-tinted, sturdy army, made his entrance peacefully, due to Marshal Feng's inadvertent aid. Passing under the arch not destined for him, but that so admirably suited the situation, Chang Tso-lin now, in his turn, became the Defender of Peking.

To the populace patiently treading their destined ways the surge of episodic rulers who battled for possession of the city was no more comprehensible than the whirling genii of the desert wind. Perhaps, they thought, the evil spirits of the storm had unleashed dark, avid passions of men.

The people burned tapers before their gods. So the Yellow Wind had gone shrieking to the sea beyond. The war had passed.

To the old, accustomed enemies—hunger and cold—the multitude gave battle. They burrowed more deeply in their wadded clothes, huddled against the chill. Over the city sifted the age-gray Peking dust.

Hooded Peking Carts.

CHAPTER XIV

ASHES OF INCENSE

From the wall where we walked one afternoon, we looked down on a succession of green-tiled roofs, undulous, interminable, like billows of the sea. Believing this to be a temple yet unexplored, we descended and started toward the buildings.

An arched gateway was wrought in iron with a design of birds in flight. Unguarded, it stood invitingly open, so we wandered into the spacious, grass-grown court, to the precincts of a palace. Deserted now, the faded tiles indicated that it had once been the home of a Manchu—and a prince.

Around the outer walls lay the less pretentious quarters for the retinue of servants. Empty were these rooms, falling to ruin. Under sheds niched at one side stood a number of Peking carts.

These were not the ordinary, heavy-wheeled vehicles drawn by one mule that we had seen ambling through the city. The blue hoods were of the finest cloth, the carved, polished wood frames of fret-

work intricately designed and enriched by rosettes of flowers. The not too comfortable space where the occupant sat cross-legged behind the driver who perched on the shafts, was lined with lilac brocade, dim but still lustrous. The interior of one cart was roofed with fur for the winter months. Iron-studded wheels had been hardily fashioned for the execrable roads of the old days; country highways that were but trails; or the streets of the capital, but deep, mired ruts. Often these carts must have slowly jolted out to the Summer Palace, a lengthy journey for the Manchu lady, who of necessity arose at three in the morning in order to greet the Empress at the proper hour.

Now the many horse stalls were unoccupied. One long-haired, dejected Mongolian pony was tethered in a corner.

The great pavilion at the north side of this court was raised on a flight of steps. Two lions of marble, the largest we had yet chanced to see, guarded the inner spaces. The great portal was barred, but a small, sculptured door in the wall stood wide open. Through it we passed.

Rank weeds had thrived between the crevices of the marble pavement, making the space seem like an unmown field. Crumbling buildings that had been of

surpassing beauty formed the four sides of the court. Decaying pillars were half stripped of their varnished lacquer. Patterns of green and blue and gold peeled in great strands from the posts, like the shaggy bark of a camphor tree.

The facade of the east pavilion had fallen away. Inside lay monstrous beams disintegrating to splinters. A sick raven clung to a stack of fallen timbers. He did not move as we approached. But as we stood over him he took his head from beneath his wing, opened a rheumy eye to contemplate the intruders. Feebly he shook his head.

The ceiling above us was but a raftered space, the floor having rotted away. Reaching beyond in the darkness were the curved eaves of the building. Leading upwards to what had once been a second story, was a delicate stairway of scarlet lacquer. Dust lay inches thick on the steps. As we padded up, it muffled our footsteps to eerie indistinctness. Then we walked a precarious way along the rafters, allured by a ray of sunlight that touched a statue, tilted against a wall.

Darkly ominous was this great Buddha, looming from the sun-flecked dust. Blackened was the tarnished form twice the height of a man. A background

of *tzu-t-an* wood torturously carved reared above the outline of his grim figure.

In the dust of this deserted shrine lay images of lesser gods and warriors of the household in grotesque chain armor. Chiseled incense burners contained not only the burnt ashes of sacrificial sticks, but the dry, shifting dust of countless winds. Huge candelabra bore the remnants of offertory tapers.

Scattered on the ground were the tablets of the ancestors. . . . Most reverenced of all possessions are these small slabs of vermilion-lacquered wood, lettered in gold. Not only are they the visible symbol of the sacred ancestors but are actually supposed to contain in no small degree the spiritual essence of the soul. On festival mornings the altars of heaven and earth are worshipped and obeisance is made to these spirit tablets. It is sacrilege to utter an oath in the direction they are placed; the candles that stand before them must be lighted from no hearth fire, but from a fresh spark, struck from the air.

Now, as if a frenzied rage had hurled them from the tables where they stood, these tablets lay in pitiful disorder. A mad man must have cursed the gods and the line of progenitors that had given him life.

But the Manchu palace was not deserted as we had

thought. Below, a man moved slowly toward us. He was clad in innumerable garments of silk lined with the fur of the sea otter that showed at the sides of the skirt as he walked. He wore an outer robe of peacock velvet. Courteous was his greeting, as if making us welcome to the precincts. No English could he speak; the slow gestures with which he tried to convey his meaning were reserved but cordial. Not old, yet he had acquired the muted patience of age.

He led us within still another court. Dilapidated splendor marked this space also. In one corner flowers bloomed. The window interstices of a single room had been freshly papered; a thin spiral of smoke came from the hearth.

"Hao!" we told the man, giving the Chinese expression of pleasurable approbation. *"Ting-hao!"*

He nodded gravely.

Reluctant to linger, we turned away.

The man picked a flower from his garden space, a full-blown chrysanthemum, with fragile petals curling like foam. He held it towards us, an offering to his involuntary guests. At that moment the blossom fell to pieces in his hand. Scattering to the ground, a chill wind whisked the petals away.

Beyond this palace the rickshaw men halted to tell

us that it was the property of a great lord. Awed, they whispered: "The Seventh Prince—the seventh brother of an Emperor—the father of a later Emperor——"

An ambrosial atmosphere of romance lingers about the Sons of Heaven who came of the Manchu line. The fierce war hordes from the north gained Peking through the whimsical fate of a singing girl, Lady Ch'en, the Round-Faced Beauty.

Between the Long White Mountain and the Amur River the Manchus were cradled. Nurhachi was the founder of the dynasty. He was plainly marked by the gods for his rôle since at birth he showed the attributes of royalty: "the dragon face and phoenix eyes." Because of his warlike qualities that translated themselves into repeated victories against the Chinese, he was able to organize the scattered tribes into definite fighting units.

For years, the Manchu clans had harassed the border country, making forays that the decaying power of the Ming dynasty was unable to resist. In 1644, after the capture of the capital by a rebel leader from Shensi, Li Tzu-ch'eng—when the Ming Emperor hanged himself and his forces scattered—the remain-

ing General of the Imperial army, Wu San-kuei, still held control of a force of unbeaten, loyal troops.

In the confusion of warfare, it befell that during the sack of Peking, while General Wu with his army was far afield, the rebel Li Tzu-ch'eng came into possession of the Round-Faced Beauty, who was concubine to Wu. Infuriated, the General in revenge joined forces with the enemy on the border. By this act the Manchus were established on the Dragon Throne. The young Emperor who had reigned at Mukden became ruler of the Chinese under the name of Shun Ch'ih.

The Manchu Emperors commanded their new subjects to shave their heads and wear the queue as a badge of servitude. A similar edict drove the Chinese beyond the walls of Peking. The conquerors took possession of the great inner enclosure, which to this day is known as the Tartar City. The capital was divided by the eight Banner corps of the Manchu army, each of which guarded an allotted section.

These banner corps, expanded from the nucleus of four companies established by Nurhachi, enrolled the men of every Manchu family. In the beginning they were a rugged people, great hunters and horsemen. Every male gave direct allegiance to the Emperor by

bearing arms in defense of the sovereign and the state.

To enter these battalions examinations were held. The first necessary qualification was skill with the bow and arrow. Having completed the preliminary trials at a stationary target, the candidate then mounted a horse and galloped down a narrow, slotted trench. Through each opening in the passage, he shot an arrow at a distant mark. The lifting of great weights was a further required test; those moving the heaviest stones achieved the highest ranking.

These bannermen held under the control of the throne were not allowed to intermarry with the Chinese. In addition to the stipend of six dollars a month given by the government, each soldier was apportioned a hundred pounds of rice. This was much adulterated with gravel, it was said, by corrupt officials who salvaged the rice and made up the requisite weight by this method. In each provincial garrison a few hundreds of Manchus were stationed. The commanding officer drew from Peking the salaries for perhaps a thousand men. When an order came to parade his troops for inspection he hurriedly impressed coolies, fitted them into uniforms and sent them out to fill the depleted ranks. All the while the commander waxed

rich on the "squeeze" he thus extorted from an unsuspecting government.

The patriarchal system of the tribes endured also in the custom of registering every female child. At stated times, the adolescent girls of each clan were commanded to appear at the palace. Those of rare beauty were selected as concubines for the Emperor. Others were trained as singers, workers in silk and gold thread or as slave girls to wait upon the Emperor and his court. . . .

Even to-day the Manchu woman possesses a stately dignity, unknown to the winsome, affable Chinese. Her feet have never been bound. Her long, brocaded robes sweep from the neck to the ground in rigid, sculptured folds. She moves with a slow, gliding grace as one accustomed to palaces. She is given unwonted height by her shoes which are raised some four inches by a stilt-like heel in the direct center of the foot. Her sleekly parted hair rises to an enormous structure of transverse wings. The "black cloud," as the coiffure is known, is adorned with flowers and jewels. Sometimes a red silk tassel depends from each side of these fan-shaped projections. In back, the hair is drawn down in a stiffened loop, covering the nape of the neck.

The cheeks are made pallid with rice powder, for the Manchus claim a blood tie with the white race and thus display their heritage. Over this vermilion patches are daubed. A brush touches a spot of scarlet to the lower lip. Even the eyelids are coated since it is not considered respectable for a woman to appear without this veritable mask. Only widows go with their faces unpainted.

In the days of the Empire when the Chinese woman was cloistered in her compound, the Manchu lady of rank achieved a greater independence. She visited friends or relatives making the journey in the seclusion of a Peking cart. To clamber into the hooded vehicle was a difficult feat quite impossible of graceful manipulation, so screens were placed to encircle the cart as she ascended. Thus she traveled equipped with her bag for betel nut, her small, dangling mirror and long-stemmed pipe with carven bowl. She was followed by a retinue of eunuchs and slave girls. A rider dashed ahead to announce her coming.

The Chinese acknowledge no nobility with the exception of certain descendants of Confucius. The head of this family is honored by the status of Duke and is known as the Representative of the Wise Men. Among the Manchus however, there were houses of

hereditary rank, either descendants of the royal family inscribed in the "red book of princes" or those on whom the title had been bestowed in recognition of some service.

These princes owed direct allegiance to the Emperor and not the slightest liberty of action was vouchsafed them without the consent of the sovereign. They could not leave Peking, nor were they permitted to visit each other. A prince was not accorded his full allowance from the Imperial coffers until he possessed five concubines and each was the mother of a son.

To-day these great houses of the nobles, like the palace of the Seventh Prince, are falling to decay. Shifting winds with constantly ravishing fingers crumble the beauty into dust. Like a far mirage they possess still an illusive quality of half-remembered days. Soon they will disintegrate into the earth from which they were wrought, leaving no trace—and of the vanishing splendor there will remain only a dream of glory.

Now the last Emperor, Hsuan T'ung, is exiled from the Forbidden City. The retainers who gave him allegiance can no longer be supported. They wait. With the incredible patience of the Oriental to whom

a hundred days are but as the passing of an hour, they bide their time, always scheming to retrieve the Empire in the north. In Manchuria, the land from which they came, they hope again to carve a kingdom from the barren wastes.

CHAPTER XV

PEKING NIGHTS

THE stars glittered like needle points in a purple sky. With wraps bundled about us in the rickshaws we heard the door of our house swing shut. Bolts shot ponderously into place, and we knew the faint, pleasurable excitement of going out to dinner.

Fascination always lurks in the thoroughfares of Peking at night. Now that we were supposedly under martial law, Hatamên Street was paced by two policemen studiously guarding the trolley tracks on which no cars had ever run. Deep in the dust, bent, sometimes obliterated, these lines were presumably an asset and the municipality kept watch over the symbol of their good intentions.

The lanes, dark and mysterious in their sudden twists, were alluring. Lighted only by the far-spaced lamps with two coppers' worth of oil allotted by the city, blurred shadows grotesquely loomed, wavered and were passed. Horses were walked to their stables at this hour, bridle-led, pacing somberly. Rickshaw

men waiting by massive gates had fallen asleep between the shafts of their vehicles. A blind soothsayer rapping the ground in front of him with tentative care, groped through the eternal dark, even as he tried to fumble through the veils of the future.

Such expeditions to another home invariably brought recollections of our own recent guests, and we enjoyed a distinct sense of meriting through our previous trials, the entertainment that would shortly be spread before us. The last time——

Ah, the last time was a day of wind. The cook, after letting the market list be whipped from his hand by a sudden gust, had wandered about all morning like a friendless ghost. Dazed and desolate, he finally crept back to his kitchen, a bunch of roses in one hand, a bottle of cream in the other.

No provisions for tiffin or dinner—none of the supplies necessary to concoct a dessert that would please the palates and prejudices of these inhabitants of the East. Particularly prejudices! Some people reject fresh fruit and others shun fruit *en masse*. There are those who undeviatingly avoid cold desserts; a few tolerate sweets chilled but previously cooked; a large majority inquire if the celery comes from the University. Our own principles would not condone cream

unless it had been previously boiled, even though it probably meant being soured in the process. When the possibilities had been sorted from this *index expurgatorius* and the eccentric qualities of a Chinese kitchen considered, a dessert was achieved only by a feat of magic.

As the hour for the repast approached, I discovered that platters were conspicuous by their absence; dinner plates had dwindled to an insufficient number. The Boy responsible for these matters, deftly averted my wrath.

"I go," he said just three minutes before the guests were due, "to near friend's house. I bring back *plenty* plate."

I could only hope he would not pillage the home of the guests we were expecting. Or, escaping that danger, he would be discreet enough to chose an innocuous pattern not easily distinguished as the property of a mutual friend. Finally, I prayed with intensive fervor, that after dinner should be over, he would not hover in the doorway, asking plaintively: "Missie, can go just now take back plate?"

At the very last moment I was forced to call the cook from his labors to implore his aid in the preparation of a small amount of flour paste. For Jim, sitting

back in leisurely fashion in his wing chair, to simulate unconcern if the guests should arrive, had lighted a cigarette. He had put the match from him in a motion intended to reach the ash receiver. It had gone beyond. Catching the paper, it had blazed, licked out the *shogi* effect of the panes and flared above to the upper shades of Korean parchment.

In an instant the fire was beaten out. The riddled façade of the house was quickly repaired with strips of paper pasted in their proper places.

Pattering along the stone of our courtyard we heard the slippered feet of women; a man's laugh. The cook, whisking the débris out of the way, returned to his roast. We greeted our guests.

From that time we have always wondered just what flurry may have preceded *our* entrance to a friend's home; what gulp was covered by the smile of welcome that met us at the gate.

Peking nights! There were parties where one danced till dawn and then at five o'clock made a foray into the thieves' market to poke for bargains in their entrancing stalls. There were foursomes of bridge; dinners in honor of personages of note.

Sometimes conjurers were brought to the home to amuse us. Respectable old Chinese gentlemen, or so

they seemed, did amazing tricks with silver rings, breaking them, dashing them together again. Thus they evolved astonishing combinations that resembled ducks or airplanes, or young girls with earrings. All the while they kept up a soothing hypnotic patter: *"Lungtun, lungtun, ega lun tun tun tun . . ."* They ate fire with ferocity; or turned somersaults and, synchronizing with that feat, produced great bowls of goldfish from not too voluminous skirts.

Although the gathering might vary from hilarious toasts to somber formality, identical features were sure to mark the evening. The failure of lights, for instance. This might last but a blinking second, causing a hiatus in the soup spoon traveling to the mouth. Or it might endure for long intervals while servants scurried for candles to lighten the gloom while we speculated on the possibility of another *coup d'état.*

At these dinners there were always topics of perennial interest. Probably in no civilized community could such a universal, unaffected response be given to the query: "Did you ever feel you'd like to murder any one?"

Brightly, often unheeding the recital of his neighbor, each speaks up spontaneously, citing horrors his Boy has perpetrated.

Fragments came—how a Boy had kept in his pockets for months a postal receipt announcing the arrival of a shipment of books. Finally the Master, cursing the delay and believing his volumes had been confiscated by the hordes of Wu, ordered a new set from the States. Whereupon the Boy inadvertently let fall the postal slip. . . . The package was salvaged from the post office, plus three months' storage bill at five cents a day.

Another, a woman, negotiating through the Boy, told of having had a pair of baggy Turkish trousers fashioned for a masquerade. Subsequently she consigned to the same tailor flannel to be used for winter pajamas. The sleeping suits were cut to the pattern of the Turk. When the owner remonstrated with due heat, the trousers were again returned, modeled after a late edition of her riding breeches.

Old inhabitants occasionally moan at the abolishment of the police stations where refractory servants used to be sent to receive "ten strokes of the cat."

Then changing, a reminiscent smile playing in his eyes, each begins to extol the virtues of his erstwhile irritating Boy. A masculine *vis-à-vis* told how his Boy took the last dress shirt at six-thirty in the eve-

ning and brought it back, freshly laundered, white and starched, at ten minutes to eight.

I gave as my share on the credit side of the ledger, the touching episode when the Cook and Boy, sensing from my preparations that Jim's birthday was a festival to be marked with all honor, brought in a sticky cake, the weirdest possible example of the confectioner's art, with MASTAR written in foaming mocha frosting. Bowing low, they presented it. We rejoiced at the ceremony, even though we had to pay for the cake by the "squeeze" on the daily bills.

Other bits of conversation colorful as the iridescence of old porcelains, tuneful to the ear as the faint music of clinking wind bells, may be caught of an evening. Wistful fragments of old days there were, ancient superstitions. One man had bought for a summer home outside the city, a nunnery of the Buddhist faith that had been under especial protection of the throne. He found a statue of the Goddess of Mercy, Kuan-yin of the Thousand Hands. In the body of the figure, an aperture flew open at an inadvertent pressure. Out fell scrolls of apricot silk closely lettered, that proved to be the secret petitions of an Empress. Not even the abbess dared know the innermost desires that fretted the heart of the woman on the Dragon

Throne. Above all intermediaries, she had striven for surcease by placing her demands near the heart of the goddess.

Or there is talk of that gigantic expedition going to explore the desert. This winter, files of camels laden with tins of petroleum, tons of flour, various supplies, start from Kalgan towards Urga and past that point for many miles. Then in the spring men will leave Peking, covering in two weeks the distance it has taken the camels all winter to traverse. Not for the legendary roc's egg is this expedition seeking; but the scientific quest seems as curiously mad—for they go to discover the eggs of the dinosaur.

Mongolia—stories of that country sweep down on the Gobi wind. Urga—the slaughter of the White Russians; hopes of empire that went crashing in massacre. In other days the proud Manchu princesses who by law were allowed to marry a Manchu only of a lower rank chose to take for husband some Mongol prince of the plains. Thus their lord might be equal to them in station and their children bear the hereditary rank. This desire entailed great hardships. They had to partake of the butter and cheese and milk abhorrent to the Chinese palate; to live in tents the nomadic life of the chill desert spaces. Mongolia—it

is solitude and vastness—a sharp mountain fringe of violet jagged peaks far beyond Peking.

A woman with a laugh apologetic yet deadly serious, and seeking the credence of her auditors, tells of strange footsteps across her court in the evening; the heels of a foreign man ringing crisply on the pavement. The house Boy followed the steps to take the coat and stick of the visiting Master. The crisp sound preceded him into the living room. And no one was there! This had happened on three successive evenings. . . .

A fusillade of like tales follows. The word ghost is blatantly absurd in this circle of sharp light. But one speaks of a house in the Legation Quarter that has a haunted room. Of heavy gongs sounding with no wind to stir, no human hands to touch them. How his Boy, white and frightened, complains of being cuffed by unseen fists; and his coolie repeatedly knocked down by some powerful wraith.

A second relates the peculiarly sinister significance of five doors in juxtaposition opening on any room or court. Strange happenings invariably ensue when the fifth door is left ajar. His statement is corroborated by another who explains that he could keep no servants, so deadly was the evil influence, until he had cut

a sixth opening in a space that already had five doors. After that the disturbances ceased, and his servants, no longer fearing pernicious spirits, remained. Some there are who laugh at these stories—and others merely affirm that Peking is very old and strange.

Meeting the varied personalities that compose the foreign colony of Peking is delightful. Lions that roar as sweet as any nightingale; the cosmopolites of the Legations; the portrait painters who have had for sitters the dignitaries of Empire and Republic; the erudite scholars, sinologues, men who have penetrated some slight distance into the complicated language and thoughts of the Oriental; the old residents who stood the siege of the Boxers and remember the horrors of those days.

A penalty is attached, a barrier that must be leaped before gaining closer acquaintance. Barbarous custom decrees that the newcomer must call first. After the informality of American life of the last decade, it is disconcerting to clamber out at five of a bitter afternoon, scanning a list such as one's mother used to possess and shuffling a tremendous sheaf of visiting cards.

Always there was a scurry of feet as I stopped before a great gate; coolies summoning Boys; Boys re-

garding the cards dubiously and leaving the guest perched for interminable, shivering moments in the rickshaw while he ran to the house.

"Missie no home. Children can come see," he would announce beamingly at the end of a long wait which has led one to believe he has searched every nook and cranny of Peking for the absent chatelaine.

On I rode. Finally the rickshaw coolie mistook a house number and I left cards with an unknown family, presumably Chinese and so technically outside the circle on which one calls. Just as I hesitated, deciding to let the episode slip by, the rickshaw man went snarling into the strange courtyard after the bits of pasteboard like a terrier rescuing a favorite bone.

Such is the obligation imposed on the new resident by the etiquette of the city. Following diplomatic procedure, which is excellent for the amenities of the corps but preposterous when applied to private individuals, the stranger is expected to call on *all* old inhabitants—introduction neither necessary nor desired.

One woman was designated as the social dictator. I was repeatedly told I must brave her drawing-room and present myself, explaining my pedigree evidently, and stating my purpose in the capital. . . . I

should have felt like a book agent. I did not go. Nothing could have persuaded me to go.

Yet when I met this arbiter of Peking at the house of a mutual friend, she promptly inquired my intentions, if not my antecedents. "Four months in the city!" she exclaimed. "And you haven't called on *me* yet?" Her manner that had been extremely cordial became in an instant distinctly chill.

A book of etiquette peculiar to this locality should have a large sale among the social dilettanti. For, unless instructed, how should one guess that in giving a dinner party you are expected to fee every chauffeur bringing guests to the extent of a dollar and a half? That the *mafoo* of horse-driven vehicles receives a dollar for the same favor; and that mere rickshaw men are entitled to fifty coppers? Or how should one know the good Oriental custom which decrees that ten per cent of the mah jong winnings should be distributed among the servants as largesse? Hints as to the best procedure of terminating the five-hour afternoon calls of Chinese visitors would be excellent. Some special suggestion should be made to cope with the young Celestial who brushed by the Boy (instructed to say "not at home") and dashed into our living room, remarking fervently to Jim: "I will not be denied. You

are my teacher, you are my father, my friend, my everythings!"

Peking society is dependent entirely upon the resources of its members for diversion. Sometimes a lone violinist delights the community for two evenings. But to enjoy the moving pictures, most of them antiquated, that make the circuit of the Orient, one must have been an exile for long years.

When left to our own devices, we preferred the Chinese theater, always bizarre and entertaining. In the early hours coolies waited to keep the seats for their masters. They chattered with unconcern while the actors performed. Soldiers, guns stacked at their sides, sprawled on benches at the rear. Above the din of the musical instruments that wailed and howled in awesome accompaniment came the shouts of the performers on the stage.

It was difficult to find places for ourselves, not too near the noise, yet not too far away to watch the play. Sometimes we climbed the rickety wooden stairs to a loge, looking down over the massed humanity through the smoke-filled air. Other nights we secured seats in the orchestra. Always the discarded teacups of a former occupant stood in the racks before us. Presently a servant offered us a cup. On our refusal, he

solicitously pressed a hot, damp towel in our hands. Bundles of these towels constantly went whirling above our heads, as the attendant from the rear sent new supplies to the front and the men in front hurled their dirty bundles back. Evidently the emotion of witnessing the drama as well as the choking, acrid atmosphere, was conducive to extreme perspiration that needed to be frequently assuaged.

Vendors came to us with watermelon seeds. All around neighbors munched them perpetually. Other hawkers brought glazed, honeyed red-fruit, harpooned on sticks, candies of sesamun seed, lichee nuts. The audience ate and talked and fanned in thorough content.

On the stage a rambling story was being enacted. It was difficult to follow the machinations of the villain, though we knew he must be one. His face was painted white, as was decreed for evil-doers. By splashing his face with vari-colored paint an actor labels himself a robber while an honest man is recognizable as such because he wears but slight make-up. In these winding chronicles where so much is pantomime, so little verisimilitude, reality must be created from thin air in the mind of the spectator.

The property man, in defiance of all laws of illusion,

roams about the stage. He places a chair that may represent the executioner's block over which an actor bows his head for punishment from an imaginary ax; or he may hand the player a riding whip which in this land of pretense does duty for a horse; or he may bring a ladder by which means a devoted son can ascend to his mother's arms in heaven. At odd moments, when the actors need refreshment because of their strenuous rôles, he patters over the stage carrying a thermos bottle or a pot of freshly brewed tea. The recipient, who may be a man in coolie cloth enacting the part of a woodcutter, leaves his saw and log, to drink the beverage with the set stage gestures that would befit a mandarin.

It is the convention—now occasionally defied—that no women play on the Chinese stage. As in the Elizabethan drama female parts are taken by lithe, smooth-faced men. Mei Lan-fang is the name that crowds theaters in Peking to-day. This most famous interpreter of feminine rôles commands sums that would sound plausible on Broadway. Three thousand gold pieces a night!

The music is the most constant, the most harassing feature of the evening. The beating of a drum indicates the passage of time in a play. Gods and ghosts

are announced by the faint tapping of a gong. The orchestra ensconces itself at one side of the stage and continues wailing and screeching. Two-stringed fiddles, clashing cymbals compete triumphantly with the feline cries of the actors that are intended to be taken as song.

Warriors stalking with prescribed postures of feet are the greatest ornament. Wearing the panoply of mythical days, painted grotesquely to frighten the enemy, they are hideously decorative. The generals have a headdress of towering pheasant feathers which are supposed to ward off the blows of swords. Their attire is studded with mirrors; their faces are like devil's masks, distorted with flaring whiskers. At times they actually do wear masks, which they change in full view of the spectators without arousing the slightest hilarity.

One night, we stopped at a side entrance to a theater. Through the open door, I saw the actors arranging their make-up. Not alone for the delection of the wealthy who can command performances for weddings, birthday feasts or funerals did these mummers pose: nor for those who paid admission to the house. A crowd of coolies gathered by that entrance, jostling, elbowing, clamoring to see. Before them

strutted the players, each so palpably enamored of himself that he desired even the plaudits of this lower class. Whirling a sword in a mighty practice stroke, adding a false wig that intensified the ferocity of the already terrifying visage, adjusting a headdress of tinsel and flame, each actor contributed his mass of color to enlighten the eternally drab monotony of these lives.

The end of the plays we never waited to see. The performance was interminable, characteristic of a people who live as if they had all eternity at their disposal. The way from the theater district of Ch'ien Mên back to our courtyard was long.

Bitter cold were the nights of winter. The streets were fronted with opaque windows that gleamed like mother-of-pearl. Hoar frost fringed the branching trees. Far off, pariah dogs barked at the moon.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

Beyond the East Gate, a short distance along the road to Tientsin, where the sprawling shops of the city slowly dwindle, giving way to open, barren spaces, there stands a curious shrine of the Taoist faith. Tung Yueh Miao, it is called, Temple of the Universe.

As we approached the entrance a leper lay in the sun, holding out whitened stumps of fingers for alms. His heavy countenance was noduled, the "lion face"; dull, his drowsy eyes. Yet he roused himself from lethargy as we passed and beat his rice bowl on the ground in a frenzy of impatience until we gave him a bit of silver.

From a room in the temple the far droning of school children came to us as they shouted their lessons aloud. Presently they passed through the portal, a tottering file of infants, writing brushes and books of moral precepts tucked under their arms.

We entered a wide court that was like a vision of judgment day. Over the gate hung a huge abacus,

many times larger than the ubiquitous instrument we had encountered on our various shopping expeditions. In case of a dispute between debtor and creditor the two parties come here to fast and pray all night. In the morning the abacus indicates the rightful decision showing the will of the gods. Ominously it faces the visitor to the temple, a reminder that these same gods take toll of the sins of men; adding up their transgressions and subtracting their virtues after death.

Around this great outer court were niched tiny cells, each crowded with half a dozen figures. These represented souls submitting to the tortures of the after world. In the third month of the year the pious come to this temple to confess their sins and extol their virtues. They make offerings of blank paper so that the presiding spirits can keep a record of them and use it at the final judgment. Doubtless inspired by the terrors of a hell so graphically pictured, the devotees vow to avoid evil.

The doctrines of Laotzu, the founder of the faith, were intended to influence men to cultivate the highest good of which they were capable. Laotzu, without denying the existence of a Supreme Being, did not actually worship a Deity. Beginning with a system of metaphysics, evolved from an impersonal philos-

ophy of nature, the religion became tinged with Buddhism. With the years it grew more mystical, more symbolic. In the hands of ignorant priests it degenerated into rank superstition, the practice of geomancy and the propitiation of evil spirits. A thousand gods are now enshrined in the temples; genii of heaven and earth.

These rule the destinies of men. For great sins they cut off twelve years of life; for lesser sins, a hundred days. Above men's heads are the Three Counselors and the Genius of Pei Tou, the North Star, who inscribes the crimes of men in a book. Within the mortal body also abide three genii and on stated days this trio ascends to the heavenly palaces and reports man's transgressions. Therefore, unless these godlings are appeased, "troubles will come to men, prosperity and happiness shun them, evil stars strike them with plagues."

If guilt is not expiated at the death of a man, then the sin descends to his posterity. Believing that the evil man does lives after him, the Taoists refute the collorary that the good is interred with his bones. They cite as instances a certain Han Kung-ch'un who each day took a broom and brushed shellfish back into the river that the ebbing tide had left stranded. His

kindness was mercifully rewarded when his grandson became a mandarin of the first class. Another man filled with an equally fervid altruism, buried the cadavers of abandoned animals. After he had made sepulchers for ten thousand his descendants became wealthy—and always among them were men who took literary degrees.

Thus, the doctrines explain with some precision that if one seeks to become a heavenly genius, one must do thirteen hundred virtuous works; if one desires to become an earthly genius, only three hundred acts of kindness are necessary.

Women are particularly exhorted to obtain merit through their virtues. For, all women who have been especially good are changed into men at their subsequent metempsychosis. That is, if they have been married. The woman who dies unmated is condemned to a perpetual limbo. From this condition she tries to reinstate herself by snatching the soul of a newborn man-child to make it her own. Therefore to protect their offspring from this calamity, the Chinese have devised the preventive of burning old shoe leather near the cradle. The odor arising is sufficiently evil to keep away even these ghoulish snatchers of souls.

Entering the temple that afternoon, we were

plunged into the midst of the Taoist pantheon. Many deities exist at these shrines. Gods of Fever and Chill were there, Gods of Colds and Coughs and Colic, Gods that protect the eyes and those that rule the stomach. Every part of the body, every ailment attacking the human form, has its tutelary deity. The sick come to murmur their prayers. Kneeling they offer sacrifices and burn their sticks of incense.

On the west side of the temple is the shrine of Yueh Chia Lao Erh, the spirit which confers husbands on lonely girls. He ties the feet of a boy-child and a girl-child together at birth, binding them with fine red thread invisible to mortal eye. They are then predestined to marry. Many are the supplications sent from the heart to this deity. To the daughter of the god, Pi Chia Yuan Chun, the Princess of the Colored Clouds, women come to beg the favors she dispenses—luck to the luckless, or most potent of needs, a child for those who have no children.

A darkened inner shrine is dedicated to the supreme deity of the Taoists, the Jade Emperor, Yü Han, "He Who Rivals Heaven." He is the spirit of T'ai Shan, the sacred mountain. Especially vigorous was the worship accorded him when he was the patron of the fanatical Boxers who believed that under his pro-

tection they were impervious to shot and sword thrust. In the blackness of the hall we could not see the face of this idol towering above the high altar. The body was wrapped in folds of orange cloth. The inky mysticism of this faith, with its elaborate symbolism, degenerated to crude chicanery, was portrayed in this ominous, looming figure, frightening in its awesome omnipresence. From the open door, light filtered to an ex-voto, the ghastly, lifelike countenance of a paper figure.

Generously this great deity of the Taoists shares his abode with another. For here, in the same sanctuary, abides Wên Ch'ang, God of Writing. This lesser idol has usurped much attention. Tier upon tier of shelves are lined with flapping yellow prayers that the priest sells. Upon these paper supplications stand offerings of pen brushes and ink slabs. All those desiring honor in their studies or those bemused souls who seek to trap illusive words into an abiding poem, must gain the favor of this powerful deity. Back in mythical days Wên Ch'ang was the one who worked out a system of ideographs that would express the human thought on paper. He found inspiration for his brush strokes by tracing the footprints that birds had marked in the damp sand.

In the far court of this temple, where trees hang whispering over the balconied cells of the monks, is housed a bronze horse. To him pilgrims come, for he can cure all maladies. His back is worn by fingers that grope along the surface, begging for surcease from the pain in their toil-bent spines; his eyes have been rubbed away by the eyes of the blind striving to see.

The efficacy of these idols is generally accepted. If cures are to be performed, if the suffering are to be helped, apparently it must be by faith.

Medicine, as practiced by the Chinese, is appallingly primitive. In close proximity to this temple is a market in the open air. Beside the gilded balls of chance, spinning wheels of fortune and the stalls where cloth is sold, an extractor of teeth advertised his trade by heaps of grisly molars. From a booth we noticed an old man creeping slowly, his face twisted into a grimace, as if in great agony. Snakes and tortoises, as well as the crude chart of a human figure, proclaimed the office of a physician. For the doctors have remedies as queer and decidedly more dangerous than the wizard priests with their spells and incantations.

Even the highest classes had no knowledge of medicine beyond a few healing herbs. The Emperor

Kuang Tsung took the famous "red pill" prescribed by a courtier with the recommendation that two men of his native village at the point of death had tried it; and that one had died, the other recovered. Three hours later, the Emperor in his turn, "ascended the Dragon."

Much the same haphazard procedure is still followed. Women, never being permitted to see a physician, can only take an ivory statuette that he passes through the drawn curtains of the sick bed and indicate their illness by pointing to the spot on the puppet where their pain is located. From this the doctor makes his diagnosis.

The pharmacopeia of the Chinese is wonderful and weird. Sometimes a dose is composed of forty different ingredients; doubtless with the hope that at least one will prove helpful. They use powdered cobwebs and ground, dried leather; bat's wings and rat's bones. Tiger's paws are prized for their strength-giving properties. From the snake comes many favorite doses. In Hangchow there is a drug manufactory that specializes in deer. They breed and slaughter them in preparation of specifics. These animals are claimed to be a panacea for every ill. Each part is used as a remedy for some particular ailment.

Another method of alleviating suffering is the proc-

ess of driving out devils by piercing the flesh with red-hot, silver bodkins. The system is known as acupuncture. These needles are thrust into the legs, the head or the stomach, whatever part of the anatomy seems to be the seat of trouble. The doctors follow a chart, marked in black spots to show where the body may be stabbed without fatality ensuing. Yet, despite their maps, a vital organ is often injured or the wound becomes infected and the patient dies.

All treatment is drastic. In the street I have chanced upon two men holding a third individual upside down. I was told that the victim suffered from a violent nosebleed that was not to be stopped by any other method. A man hit by a motor car is always vigorously shaken by the police if they happen to be near the scene of the accident. No matter how many broken bones may be jangled into compound fractures, it is their duty to prevent the injured from losing consciousness—as the soul thus escaping, perhaps might not return.

Knowing the stringent measures of their own physicians, fearing the foreign doctors who seem like devils, slashing and cutting apparently without reason, it is small wonder that the sick crawl to the altars

of their gods—to offer oblation, to placate by the burning of a taper—and then to die.

When their days are ended, cut short by sins, as they believe, a doom awaits more terrible than the sufferings of their poor lives on earth.

At this Taoist Temple, in these cells spaced around the huge courtyard, were displayed the terrors of the after life. But farther along the road is the Shih Pa Yü, the Temple of the Eighteen Hells, dedicated to a more graphic display of these horrors.

When a man dies, his *hun*—which approximates our meaning of spirit—is divided into three parts. One is buried with the body in the coffin and becomes extinct after three generations. The second stays for an indefinite but longer time in the tablet that is worshiped at the family altar. The third must go through purgatory to expiate the sins of the mortal flesh and is eventually reincarnated into a new body according to its deserts.

The government of hell, according to the Buddhist books, is an exact counterpart of the Chinese rule under the Empire. The mandarins here were once mandarins on earth, so the ambition for power is doubly great when it bestows not only temporal dignity but also the opportunity to maintain that same

administrative position in the Lower World. Faithful officials forego their next incarnation in order to preside over a tribunal of souls, condemning them to punishment and meting out their subsequent turn on the wheel of life.

The soul reaching hell has a hook fastened in his back and his sins weighed. If his virtues are greater than his sins, he is sent back to earth immediately in another body. If the evil is greater than the good, he is held before a gigantic mirror and beholds how he is to be degraded in the next life for the transgressions of the past; transformed into a dog, a sheep, a cow, or, lowest of all, an insect.

Before this fate can be accomplished and he be given again the boon of life however lowly, he must pay for his wrong-doing in the courts of hell. It was these bits of purgatory that we saw portrayed that afternoon at the Shih Pa Yü.

Figures, horribly grotesque, writhed in their niches, attended by demons who prodded them with pitchforks, boiled them in oil, burned them at the stake, lashed them, tormented them in every conceivable manner. One sensed that this was not entirely the imagination picturing an after world of retribution,

but that all these tortures were originally performed on the living man, criminal or enemy, that the Chinese wished to kill. For this reason the display of bodies with arms and legs amputated, tongues torn out, nails driven into the flesh, snakes entwining the form, was peculiarly grewsome. Sawing a body in two, were demons who used the same instrument, the identical motion of the men who cut boards in front of the furniture shops.

It would appear that virtue were decidedly the better part, after viewing the punishments endured by these plaster, painted sinners. Yet if a man be good, he must drink the Tea of Oblivion that makes him forget everything, even the four points of the compass. Then he will be born a man again and endure the trial of life all over.

Only the saints—or those who have called on the sacred name of Amitabha—may for a space attain the Pure Land of the Western Paradise, where the white cranes, the peacocks and the parrots chant buddhist prayers. Where a gentle zephyr stirs the leaves to the sound of ten thousand harps; where the lotus, the flower of paradise, blooms to full beauty. The saints, born anew from the bud of a lily into that land of perfection, know no sorrow.

Even they in time must come again in the circle of transmigration. Until purified from the eddies of the wheel of life, they reach the final haven of redemption, Nirvana—where all souls are One.

CHAPTER XVII

FLOWER O' THE MOON

FLOWER O' THE MOON that morning when we first saw her, wore a long padded robe, the pale glistening pink of a rose petal. Her small pink shoes added an inch to her diminutive stature by their tilted purple heels. In her glossy hair she had affixed an orchid, a deep color note repeating the Tyrian shade.

She stood gazing at the emerald that lay in the inner room of the jewel shop near the Ch'ien Mên Gate. All Peking came to behold the fabulous stone, four hundred pounds in weight, huge beyond all dreams of emeralds. Roughly hewn from the earth, it emitted an enticingly wicked glint, reminiscent of secret, frozen waters, miasmic poisons, hidden, insidious passions. Not even the Son of Heaven had possessed a gem so gigantic. Now the dealer who had procured this treasure from some mysterious source offered it to all the world for sale.

The oval, softly curved face of Flower o' the Moon mirrored blank wonder.

Her awe was quite comprehensible for the stone seemed mythically large. The dealer, swearing by all the Bodhisattvas, vouched for the authenticity. Not possessing the skill of lapidaries, we could only conclude that it looked very like an emerald and marvel at the miracle of congealed fire.

Flower o' the Moon drew one hand from a tiny muff and tentatively felt the surface of the stone with a ringed forefinger. Her carmine lips parted in ecstatic content.

"It is smoother than silk," she murmured to her companion. "Smoother than the finest silk."

The other girl nodded. She was clothed in shimmering, faint blue, identical in cut to the garb of Flower o' the Moon. But she had not yet attained the luxury of an ermine muff, for she closely wrapped her hands about a miniature hot water bottle.

They were sing song girls, but because they were very young an amah attended them. She was a wrinkled old woman who pattered after them with the stilted, ungainly gait of one who walks on "golden lilies." Not for an instant did her dessicated lips cease uttering syllables, a steady stream of comment, ejaculation and imprecation. The friend escorting us who translated the high-pitched, dulcet words of Flower o'

the Moon smiled with grim appreciation but did not venture to impart the observations offered in the vernacular by the older woman.

"The jewel—I desire it!" Flower o' the Moon exclaimed. "More than I yearn for food that keeps alive the spark of life, I covet that gleaming stone."

The girl in watery blue tittered.

"I shall sing better than all others in Peking. My voice shall be called lark of the world. . . . And some man entranced by the honey sweetness of my song—will bring the jewel to me."

"Some prince of Sungaria or Yunnan, some barbarian of the hinterland? There is not one in all the city who has wealth enough to buy it."

Flower o' the Moon wrinkled her mouth in disapproval. "In the old days the Son of Heaven would not have talked of buying! He would have ordered it to be carried off on the backs of his eunuchs . . ."

Derisive laughter again broke from the girl in blue. She minced her words. "Foolish one, do you think *you* would have been admitted to the palace? Do you not know the pillar set at the gate on which it was written that no woman with bound feet—which is to say no woman of Chinese blood—might enter there? Barred, as the demons are shut from the Land of the

Western Paradise! What chance would there have been to become a favorite of Emperors beyond those dragon tiled walls?"

Flower o' the Moon moved away, impatient at the shrill voice of her companion. "It would have been before the Manchu days," she retorted, arranging the fictitious events to her own liking. "Who knows?—the Ming Emperors, or those of the far T'ang dynasty a thousand years ago? They conferred favors on the singers that gained their royal pleasure. . . . He would be a great Emperor. . . . I would kneel before him, swooning with delight at his gracious condescension. . . ."

Again she rubbed her finger along the emerald block.

"First I would command slippers, chiseled with care. Magic slippers of emerald that should be potent through charms implanted by some very holy priest. Slippers smaller than those of any palace woman—which would carry me always to my heart's desire. . . . "

Chattering curses like a futile monkey, the amah led the two girls away.

"Little fools, do not weary yourselves! To-night,"

she told them, "there is the fat merchant of Chang who gives a feast."

The status of the sing song girl in China is that of entertainer. She is trained in the pleasing arts. Her mind is tempered to whimsical repartee; her fingers taught to play the lute or butterfly zither. Her voice is cultivated to high notes until it becomes an instrument of unexpected cadences and shrieking force, of jerky violent staccato or long banshee wails. At banquets, her part is not to cajole or entice, but solely to amuse. Fastidiously she guards her virtue—until perchance one day she consents to sell it at a lofty price. Then matters are arranged in stereotyped conformity with the etiquette of the occasion: a feast is ordered in her honor, costing sometimes as much as five thousand taels. Payment for the dinner is made to her. From the amount supposedly expended, she extorts a large proportion as her "squeeze." Thus the bargain is concluded.

In Peking the singing girls have formed a society, euphoniously known as the "Flowery Kingdom." The favorite, acknowledged to be the most accomplished and most beautiful houri, is chosen as ruler. Those only slightly less charming are satellites surrounding

the throne, in this realm of Pa Fa Hutung, the Eighth Lane, where the singing girls congregate. For the delection of officials of the Republic who come frequently to be amused, they translate the monarchial terms of their organization into democratic nomenclature. Clear Rainbow Cloud, so undeniably a queen, then assumes the inappropriate title of president. Langorous Perfume, who comes so perilously close as a rival, jestingly becomes dictator of this organization that epitomizes the politics of the capital.

One night a group of us gathered in a gilded tea house of the Ch'ien Mên pleasure quarter to listen to the music of the singing girls. Surprised, we recognized the girl whom we had seen in the jewel shop—Flower o' the Moon.

Posed now by the trellised background of the windows she seemed but a swaying shadow against the pale gold radiance of the lantern light. For she was garbed after the fashion of the T'ang dynasty in the long draperies and flowing sleeves of ancient days. Her hair was twisted high in bewildering loops after the manner of a lady on a silken scroll, a goddess rising above the sea clouds. Ornaments of kingfisher

feathers glinted metallic blue against the ebon sheen of her tresses smoothed with scented elm.

We sat upright in stately Chinese chairs that will not permit one to be comfortable at any angle and listened to her songs.

Flower o' the Moon was entrancing. Her face, powdered like a moon pearl, was rounded to delightful contours. Her eyebrows, following the classic ideal, curved like willow wands. She displayed the naïve innocence of a puppet. Yet her eyes were brooding, holding an infinitude of knowledge.

Seating herself on the floor at our feet, she chanted a recitative in plaintive tones. Occasionally she touched the strings of her butterfly zither to notes of poignancy, accentuating her slowly intoned phrases. Music of Emperor's gardens, she conjured for us, tales of Emperor's loves.

For in Chinese lore there are remembered four beauties who stand preëminently above all other women. Chao Chun was counted the most virtuous; Tiao Chan, the most patriotic; Hsi Shih, the most beautiful—and Yang Kuei-fei, the most artful.

It was of the last courtesan that the singing girl told us: Yang Kuei-fei who was born of the love of a dragon for a star. We could imagine the odor of

the cassia flowers as the Son of Heaven greeted this favorite in the dusk of golden days. We heard the tinkling streams through the enchanted palace bowers. Under moon-tinted clouds, fantastic as madrepore, feasted the Imperial Concubine and her Emperor. . . .

Li Tai-po, best beloved poet of China, he whose brush created flowers at each stroke, who sang so sweetly he was called a banished angel—Li Tai-po made songs to the imperishable loveliness of Yang Kuei-fei. As she held for him an ink slab scented with larkspur, he painted seven character poems on a rose gauze screen.

Monotonously sweet, strangely spell-binding with feline, exotic notes, the voice of the singing girl went on. We guessed more of the tales than was translated to us in hurried whispers. For Flower o' the Moon told of the Pepper Chamber where the palace women were segregated and of the quarrels that resulted in this forced proximity. Kuei-fei always triumphed. A score of years followed—years of extravagance, with gold and jewels poured into her avid fingers. A whim of hers for fresh lichee nuts—burs resembling prickly strawberries, holding a juicy meat of snow-like honey—caused them to be brought daily from a

distance of six hundred miles with all the heart-breaking, life-taking haste that only an imperial message should command.

Clouds of war menaced the kingdom; cities were sacked—because Kuei-fei installed her favorites in positions of great importance and kept an aged Emperor from attending to the affairs of state. At last mutinous soldiers swarmed to the palace and demanded the life of the woman in forfeit for the destruction she had wrought.

The Emperor covered his eyes with the broad golden sleeves of his robe—now helpless.

Yang Kuei-fei, confronted by the mob, knew there was no escape. She fastened a silken cord to a branch of a flowering pear tree and slipped the noose over her head. . . .

"Long live the spirit of Yang Kuei-fei!" called the soldiers. Knowing that she was dead and could work no more harm to their country, they knelt down and acclaimed her beauty.

The music ceased as a rippling breath of a zephyr fades from a pool. The singing girl, Flower o' the Moon ended, her voice quivering in a shouting sob. She rested, passive hands folded over her breast.

Suddenly she glanced up with an impish smile.

"You likee?" she demanded, speaking for the first time the stilted English she had acquired with the other accomplishments of her profession.

Ragged applause broke from the auditors.

Her face was expressionless. It occurred to me that she might easily look to Yang Kuei-fei as an example, since the Imperial Concubine was said by her enemies to err on the side of plumpness. Flower o' the Moon possessed that same enticing fullness of countenance. The compliments and ejaculatory comments she accepted with the judicial gravity of an infant. Bowing in quick, jerky motion, she wore a fixed smile of amiable acquiescence.

As we were leaving, I edged my way toward the girl.

"Hao!" I expressed my pleasure by the convenient monosyllable. Then I asked in English: "Have you yet gained the emerald?"

Her eyes sparkled in remembrance. "Most big emerald," she answered. "Much cold fire."

"Your lark's voice—surely it will bring you the stone some day. . . ."

She held out her hand on which a new ring glistened. "The merchant of Chang, he who is fat and barters in sharks' fins, made me this present."

Then with the smug complacency of a Chinese uttering a platitude, she observed: "Much small stones some day make all samee one great big stone. My emerald, he grow from little piecee!"

CHAPTER XVIII

MONKS OF THE YELLOW ROBES

UNDER the north wall of the city lies the monastery of a vanishing faith. Priests remain in large numbers but the cult is practiced with irreverent indifference.

This temple dedicated to Lamaism is impressive even in approaching ruin. On the autumn afternoon we first came upon it a glorious sun cast a tracery of shadowed leaves against barbaric yellow tile. A *p'ai lou* at the entrance with a design of dragons, blue and green and gold, was propped to keep the weight of the heavy crest from breaking down the pillars. Beyond stretched an interminable court of withered grass.

Behind a wall to the right were lined rows of huddled cells: dark, foul dwelling places of the monks. Officially, the brotherhood in this temple numbered fifteen hundred. Even at this time, when they have lost prestige and no longer enjoy the protection of an Emperor, hundreds are left. Unkempt, dirty, indolent, they loiter in the sun, garbed in rust-brown or mulberry cassocks tied with a girdle of dingy scarlet.

The Lama faith is an exotic form of Buddhism. The Emperor, when he was in power, was anxious to bind to him ever by stronger ties the vast hordes of Thibet. So he favored their religion, encouraged these monks and granted them special privileges, bestowing this great temple for their worship. A "Living Buddha," a god incarnate, was enshrined in the cloister. In return the Emperor expected the allegiance of Thibetan and Mongol horsemen for his wars, tribute from the subjects of the chill hinterland. He thus strengthened the loyalty of those far provinces through this religious medium.

Centuries ago a certain Thibetan prince was conquered by the men of China, his territory made tributary. To cement the alliance there was given to him a wife from this country who would share his throne. Into Lhassa, the rude capital of Thibet, Wen Chen, the Chinese princess, took her dowry of silken robes, her finely fashioned ornaments of pearls and, most precious of all, a huge gilt statue of the Buddha.

This prince possessed another wife, a Nepalese, who loved the same calm god. The women won the ruler to their faith. Temples were built to enshrine their idols. The people, not long after, accepted and worshiped this new deity of eternal meditation.

The crude Thibetan mind, however, soon distorted the preachings of the Buddha. A cult of malignant devils evolved; demons that tormented body and soul and needed to be propitiated constantly. Figures from a pre-Buddhist pantheon, the *Bon,* remained and shared the offerings of grain and tobacco. Great monasteries sprang up to house the many monks who ministered, not to the religious requirements, but to the superstitions of the populace. Buddhism has flowered to weird blooms but it reached its most repulsive and decadent form in these Thibetan practices.

An abbot of the "Yellow" Lamas, the orthodox sect—as opposed to the "Red" heretics—gained great temporal power. To fortify his position he amplified an old Thibetan legend recalling to these people that they were descended from a monkey and a goddess. The offspring of this pair, naturally very unruly, were entered by the Compassionate Spirit of the Mountain and by the permeation of this beneficent influence became human beings. By a series of complicated explanations this abbot buttressed his pretentions to power by declaring that the Spirit of the Mountain, whom the Thibetans reverenced as the source of all good, had become incarnate in him. He assumed the title of Dalai Lama—Dalai, which means "vast as the

ocean." As the ruler of the kingdom, the head of the church, his sway was undisputed.

At the death of this first Dalai Lama it was decreed that the Spirit of Compassion would descend to the next ruler of the faith. A princely, new-born child was chosen and accorded the honors of a divine being. Thus the succession passed. Sometimes vicissitudes attended the Dalai Lama. It was notable that several died just before attaining the age of eighteen at which time the Regent, governing the country during their minority, was to hand over the reins of power to the Living Buddha.

But the sway of the Thibetan Lamas was great. In the time of Kublai Khan the cult came back to China. Under the Mings and Manchus it remained. A string of temples, reaching from Thibet, dotted the country, culminating in this great sanctuary at Peking. Yung Cheng was the Emperor who gave the brothers this monastery in 1772. It was the palace of his birth and according to custom could never again be used as a private dwelling. Sanctified, it became the temple of this Yellow sect.

For many years this *gompa,* or solitary place, was stringently guarded by the Lamas. A stranger penetrating the mysterious interior was certain not to

Indolent Monks Loitered in the Sun.

escape. Since Boxer days, however, the monastery has been open to the public. Priests may once have been ascetics and savants in this fastness, but it is apparent that now they have lost every claim to scholarly pretensions.

We wandered through these shrines roofed with the dragon yellow tiles denoting Imperial protection. The second court we found guarded by the ubiquitous lions, cast in bronze. A bell tower and a drum tower of curving, upward lines designed to discourage the alighting of evil spirits, stood in the mottled shade of the great trees. At the inner gate we came upon monstrous guardian demons, kings of paradise, who apportion the four points of heaven. To each belong his appropriate color and symbol. Tsung Chang, ruler of the south, is red and holds an umbrella; Wen, king of the north, is black and has a snake; Huong Min of the East is white and flourishes a sword; Chih Kuo of the west is blue and plays a guitar. This panoply is their equipment for driving away evil influences that might invade the sanctuary.

Within the farther court stood an ancient stone, sculptured with ideographs in four languages, telling the history of the Lamas in Chinese, Manchu, Mongol and Thibetan. An incense burner of exquisitely

chiseled bronze towered to an impressive height.

Dim were the chapels, gold, tarnished by the smoke spirals of centuries. Small coils of brown incense topped by a bright flower or a peacock feather burned before ancient gods. A thin tracery of blue vaulted through the heavy-laden air—an odor of clove and camphor and the sweet-scented wood of the cypress tree.

Low prayer benches covered with yellow cloth were arranged in rows. Before the image on the altar were placed the eight mystic Buddhist symbols, wrought in silver gilt. The first represented the victorious wheel of a spiritual empire on which the sun never set. Next was a lucky diagram, a twining cord known as "Buddha's entrails," which is the symbol of the countless reincarnations to which man is subject. The lotus flower of heavenly birth, the golden fish of good fortune, all were here.

An importunate priest with gestures reduced to a formula lighted a stick of incense as we entered the chapel. He waved it impudently in front of our faces and thrust it before the Bodhisattva of the shrine. Assuring us the offering would bring good luck, he peremptorily demanded cumshaw. Repulsed, he turned away muttering, extinguishing the glowing

stick in the ashes of a thousand burnt offerings.

His anger was not permanent for he had other methods of extortion. He reappeared with alacrity, whirling a prayer wheel he solicited us to buy. These metal cylinders were first designed to bring about a meditative state of mind, conducive to thinking of holy things. Now filled with paper prayers they are spun mechanically, thousands upon thousands of times by the person who wishes to acquire merit for the next life without the mental effort of praying.

"Hail! Jewel in the Lotus Flower!" reads the inscription on these prayer wheels. To utter the words is to shun earthly dangers. Merely to look upon the mystic letters or to turn them in the wheel is sufficient to escape hell and reach paradise, the lotus land. For this Lord of Mercy, Amitabha, whom they greet in prayer is ruler of that Western Paradise, beyond the hills.

In the beginning Buddha, the Teacher, gave the word that as a man lived, so should he receive his reward, working out his salvation through successive incarnations. Buddha showed the way that all who accept him as their guide may travel to Nirvana—ineffable bliss which is "the perfection of tranquil joy, passionless harmony, enlightenment." The arahat,

having reached this state, will never again be subjected to the trials and perils of earthly existence as we know it.

The enlightened when they call upon the name of Amitabha for salvation believe in the efficacy of their cry. For they hold that a man calling on the holy name of Buddha will awaken the Buddha, the spiritual good that abides in the depths of his own being. All thought of self will vanish.

But the original doctrine of retribution and this mystic cry of the earnest seeker have been debased by a mechanical repetition of syllables. The belief that heaven is literally opened by crying the name of this Lord of the Western Paradise has resulted in a convenient system of death-bed repentance. Thus the dying man's gaze is directed to the idol, multicolored threads from his hands are attached to the statue and, as his soul slips away, it is supposed to be drawn into heaven by mystic communion with Buddha.

There is still a semblance of justice in this system. Though faith be enough to permit rebirth and souls are sped to the Pure Land of the Western Paradise, enclosed in the calyx of a lotus flower on the sacred lake, they must await the unfolding according to their

merits. The divine radiance of Buddha which is the reward, may not come for centuries. Some lie quiescent for unnumbered aeons. The wicked, who have committed the "five heinous sins" never know the blossoming of their flower, but held emprisoned in the lily bud wait for "twelve greater kalpas"—which is for eternity.

"Namo Omito-Fu," urged the monk. "Call on the name of Omito-Fu!"

We did not buy the wheel of prayers though the brother twirled it enticingly and offered us paradise for a Mexican dollar. Nor did we acquire the battered plaster Buddha painted in crude colors, and guaranteed to be extremely efficacious because it had been brought from the forbidden city of Lhassa.

Wearying was this display of greed, the leering cupidity of monks, supposed protectors of these shrines. For, at every altar, the performance was repeated with identical features.

One chapel contained fantastically embroidered pictures of bright silk threads. We glimpsed a meaningless confusion of fanged beast-men. Then the priest hastily dragged curtains across, obliterating our vision.

"Immodest pictures," he explained in the careful

English he had learned in order to press his demand. Out jerked a grimy hand. "You pay to see?"

We did not pay. Yet beyond, unquestionably immodest, were the obscene Buddhas, negligently uncovered. Two contortioned, grotesque bodies on one pedestal with a number of outstretched arms, we recognized as the Passion Buddha which is for sale in miniature at the curio shops. Uselessly obnoxious were these statues, used in the name of religion. Like the skulls on the altars, the paraphernalia of awe, they contribute to the terrorization of the people and the resultant domination of the priests.

Even the statue of the supreme Buddha, Maitreya of the Resurrection, is lowering. As we came upon it we saw a tall, black figure, seventy feet in height, carved from the massive trunk of a Yunnan cedar. The grim, sardonic countenance frowned at us from that great distance. Lurking shadows veiled the contorted face. In the last shrine of all, the holiest place, this devil dwelt. How could his priests be but vicious counterparts?

Now as the twilight lengthened there came from the Drum Tower the rhythmic, monotonous beat of the great drum. Regular, resonant, the continued boom quickened the pulse to an exultant response that might

well be taken for the ecstasy of religion. Yet this sluggish remnant of monks, creeping snail like to mass, what could they know of rhapsody?

Through the courtyards young boys straggled, wrapping around them soiled saffron capes that swept the ground. In groups of three or four, chattering, buffeting each other, whacking heads with the dingy yellow helmets of their order, they shuffled to prayers. Children followed, imps of six or seven years, clad in the same bedraggled robes. On their heads showed white, round patches where the flesh had been slit and incense sticks burned into the scalp at the time of their novitiate.

These boy priests are waifs recruited from parents who sell their children or from famine districts where babes are abandoned because there is not sufficient food to keep them alive. Occasionally, in families bereft of children, a vow is made to a deity that, if a son is given them, the parents in gratitude will offer him as a Buddhist monk. When the child has been born he wears for a time the habit of a bonze, until he is ransomed and some poor infant offered as a substitute to Buddha.

Into the hall these boys filed in sulky obedience, taking their places on benches in long rows beside the

altar. Like laggards in an ill-disciplined classroom, they paid scant attention. The Proctor, wearing a heavy wine-colored cope and the ochre helmet supposed to have been copied from the contours of Chui Shan, the sacred mountain, took his place in the center. By his side was a chiseled brass bowl and a vase holding a bunch of peacock feathers. He raised the feathers high in one hand—the chanting began.

The monotonous litany deepened, swelled to ponderous proportions. Resounding tones of the bass recited magical incantations to exorcise evil. Droning after him came the chorus of adolescent voices, in endless, accentuated syllables. Swaying rhythmically, moving fingers in devotional poses, they followed the ritual.

Vaulting to the coffered ceiling throbbed these eternally monotonous voices. Through the vast, dim prayer hall, where the latticed windows admitted but a faint, milky light, the Proctor paced up and down between the files of boys. Perpetually echoed the strange cadences.

The droning brought a sense of ineffable harmony, lifting the soul above material things, projecting it to some far realm of tranquillity. These *mantras,* sacred words or phrases incessantly repeated, are believed to produce a mystic number of vibrations and by occult

THE PROCTOR IN WINE-COLORED COPE AND OCHRE HELMET.

influences elevate the soul. As consciousness was engulfed by the grave, dolorous tones, vast waves of sound, exaltation grew.

As the statues of some Buddhas mirror the bliss of Nirvana, so these chants gave promise of divine oneness with the universe. The Lamas profess a faith attuned to great truths. A religion, that, had it retained its ecstatic, purified form, might have brought man to a perfection dreamed by Gautama. These harmonies reflected the rhythm of the spheres, merging all into oblivion—that is peace.

A rustle broke the moaning litany. We glanced up —abruptly recalled to the decadent aspect of a temple falling to ruins. The Proctor had become weary. He limped away to his evening rice.

CHAPTER XIX

PAGEANTRY

On Ch'ien Mên Street the world goes by: a stout Chinese in a rickshaw, holding a naked, iridescent fish in his lap; marriage banners with the character of joy, derived from the intermingling branches of two trees; sing-song girls, scarlet-lipped, in robes of pallid brocade . . . Camels, tufted with shaggy winter wool, pass in long files, lifting their heads with precision to avoid the tugs of the nose string. Metropolitan police, flaunting white putties out of time, march in a new goose step with a creaking of knee joints. So the procession interminably swarms before the façade of glittering gold lace, shop fronts of such intricate gilded carvings that they seem like caskets for precious jewels.

A groom in moth-eaten livery, jerking the horses clumsily, leads a vividly painted equipage out of the turmoil of the main artery. Inside the white shuttered brougham with its tasseled curtain of faint blue silk, sit two Chinese women. Bareheaded, swathed

with incongruous fur neck pieces designed for Western dress of a past decade, they do not gaze curiously into the street on this rare excursion beyond their homes. Instead they stare with entranced fascination into the large mirror the carriage provides, solicitously regarding themselves. The older woman has hair smoothed back to sculptured simplicity by an ungent of fish oil. The companion at her side shows the status of unmarried daughter by the flapping, stringy bangs that fall over her forehead and into her blinking eyes.

A silk shop is usually the objective of these women, where they while away long afternoons. A generation ago peddlers came to their homes with rolls of glistening fabrics. Now custom permits a Chinese woman of fashion to venture to these stores for her purchases.

These emporiums I found were vast, multiple-storied buildings. Galleries extended around a central, open space. A stove of inadequate proportions failed lamentably to project heat through the many cubic feet of damp air. Its thin pipe went vaulting to the ceiling five stories above. Tables dotted the floor, and to one of these I was ushered. Tea was brought in

small cups without handles; cigarettes were offered me.

The salesmen, at least six to a customer, always took an interminable time. They climbed the stairs in leisurely fashion, shuffled around the balconies where the bolts were stored. Ultimately they descended with a shade that clashed appallingly with the piece I had given as a sample. Nor did the fabric interest them, for they attempted to match satin with pongee, or crêpe with silk.

"Very pretty," they commented in chorus as they held up an excruciating magenta as a substitute for an evanescent tint of mauve. "You no likee? Look see, Missie. Pretty! Pretty!"

It was tantalizing to roam through the rooms, peering into the glass cases where the silks lay. For I wanted everything—the brocades that shimmered like moonlight on water with an illusive design of silver thread; bold flowered silks, even though they could be of little use in the Western scheme of things; dim silks of rich, curious colors with patterns woven in the fabric; faint grenadines like beetle's wings, stiffly embroidered with flowers; heavy satins for winter robes.

Yet I did not wish to consign all I possessed to these

merchants of silk, knowing that next door existed a shop of furs.

Crossing the intervening court, I entered this provocative place. Here, hung on racks along the wall were the outlines of coats roughly fashioned with body and sleeves. They were ready to be slipped into the winter garments of the Chinese. I was shown kolinsky, sable and marmot, yellow Chinese mink, squirrel, and a species of Mongolian cat that so cleverly masquerades as squirrel. The man shook coat after coat in front of me while I admired—and sneezed. Through my sneezes I heard his assurance that he could copy the wrap I was wearing. I began to think I was catching a cold of heroic proportions so that I would need all the furs he had in stock. . . . Then I realized I had been inhaling clouds of invisible insect powder, wafted towards me. Choking and gasping, quite unable through my tears to distinguish the furs, I departed.

Another afternoon on Jade Street Jim and I discovered a bewildering amount of treasure. From the low doorways men beckoned us to their shops. A string of cut crystal was held up glinting in the sun. Again a small tree placed by the window caught our eyes; a tree of coral, amethyst, rose quartz and jade

twisted to a semblance of life with quivering flower petals, seeming real and yet too exotically precious for reality.

It was enough to tempt us—so in we went. Fantastically exquisite were the pieces of carved jade the curio dealer offered. Deep, heavy greens, the color of tropic verdure were wrought into marvelous fantasies. Foliage interlaced was crossed by a flight of winged birds. He showed us agate, less precious but scarcely less desirable in its sculptured forms, the apples of peace, and the peaches of longevity fashioned into charms. Amber, clear honey-colored globules were flung before us. . . . Then the merchant craftily brought out a string of perfect pearls that dripped like iridescent, frosty dew through his wrinkled fingers.

A running fire of comments accompanied this display. The shopkeeper talked to us, to himself; argued his price; told of his losses; assured us he would be ruined, his entire shop forced to close if he let us have the desired articles even a copper cheaper. He inveighed vigorously against his rival dealers and their scurrilous methods. With the same inexhaustible breath he urged upon us a set of jeweled finger nail protectors that at one time had graced the slim, yellow hands of a Manchu prince.

We could never carry off all the coveted treasures. But we made endless excuses to return to these shops again and again. Each time new delights were found in the ever-changing supply.

Lantern Street, adjacent lane to this Street of Jade, held other allurements. Here we searched to find a shade for our library lamp. Into shop after shop we went. At last we came upon one that we considered unique. It was painted with some three hundred minute figures. One group carried a wedding palanquin in a great processional with banners and the ducks and dolphins of fidelity. In the opposite direction wended a funeral cortège, gayly dressed bearers lifting a catafalque of red and green.

Obtaining the lamp of black and gold for which this was destined, had been an adventure—and a discovery in Chinese industry. Riding down a mold-gray alley one afternoon we came upon a sign marked: "Cloisonné." Knocking at the gate we were admitted to a dilapidated inner court. A house of great pretentions, now falling to ruin, had been rented for the fabrication of this ware.

Tall vases of copper stood on the floor of one room. In another were many smaller objects: book ends, salt and pepper sets, match boxes and cigarette cases,

Shop Fronts with Intricate, Gilded Carvings.

all of this same roughly burnished metal. Young boys were at work arranging intricate designs with tiny copper coils. From a piece of tubing they cut circular bits and, dipping them in a cement, adjusted them on the metal base. It was a process of extreme delicacy, demanding the patience of endless days and an unerring hand to cover so minutely the wide spaces.

In a third room the interstices of the design were filled with a kind of clay. At a table still younger children painted this surface composite with vivid colors; yellows, greens and violets of prismatic violence. We did not fancy these combinations that were to evolve into dragons lashing their tails in unnecessary fury, so we chose a graceful, wide-lipped vase and ordered it finished in gold and black.

The pieces were fired in the furnace by these same children who, like elves, directed the work. Very precise, leisurely gnomes, they were, quite intent on the business of transmuting base clay and copper into a gleaming object of beauty that would draw the light to its polished surface, then reflect the glow with soft radiance.

Our lamp we felt would be a permanent acquisition that could be taken back to the homeside. So many of our purchases had the unwieldy weight and bulk that

gave their possession but a transitory value, for we knew that on leaving Peking at the time of exodus they would be abandoned. Many foreign residents of this shifting population follow the same procedure.

One day we stumbled into this limbo of ephemeral, discarded things—the auction mart. We had wondered mildly about the red and white checked flag that every other day had fluttered from this shop.

Inside on a platform, presided a myopic, Cockney auctioneer.

"Gentlemen—and lady," he facetiously addressed one missionary woman who persistently clung to the edge of the platform. "Lot Number thirty-seven—an assorted set of nine curtain rods and some h'excellent shoe-trees. What 'm I bid? What *am* I bid?"

Chinese dealers who thronged ten deep, listened with interest. The auctioneer had placed his interpreter in the midst of the milling crowd and the latter enumerated the objects to be bought, apparently extolling their virtues at great length. The Chinese gave but scant attention to these particular articles under the hammer, evidently deeming them unsalable. A feeble voice from some distance bid fifty cents.

"Sixty," uttered the missionary woman in baggy gray tweeds.

Promptly the auctioneer thumped down his block. Her mild blue eyes looked at him in reproachful astonishment. She fingered the rusty rods, disjointed one that could not be coaxed back into working order and, with the pair of number twelve shoe-trees, placed them resignedly upon a stack of cracked dishes that had already fallen at her bid.

"Lot Number thirty-eight," chirped the auctioneer hastily. "Two vases—Ch'ien Lung period. May be worth a thousand dollars for all I know. 'Ere's your chance everybody, 'ere's your chance. Yes, the top o' one is broken."

From the outer fringe, foreigners in search of blackwood and good rugs craned their necks to regard the spurious Ch'ien Lung. The interpreter, evidently to enhance the value, shouted: "Ming!" The Chinese buyers stirred, with faint chuckles, repeating: "Ta Ming—Ta Ming." The bidding was heavy. A dealer acquired the vases, probably intending to mend the broken top with such skill that a potential client would be deceived. With equal voracity other Chinese dealers bought feeble iron bedsteads, water filters, old felt hats, kerosene lamps. It was a devouring gulf into which the conglomeration of foreign homes was poured indiscriminately.

In their bazaars the Chinese display that same eclectic taste, arranging totally unlike objects in close proximity. Their butcher stalls are flanked by counters where photographs of their favorite actors are sold. To a Western mind the connection between shoes and brass door knockers, or between bolts of sober cloth, bath soap and paper flowers is hard to fathom. But that irrelevance of assortment leads one to further exploration.

Through the bazaar on Morrison Street we walked the aisles a hundred times. We had no intention of buying these things. Yet by some magic we always found packages of mandarian oranges tucked under our arms and toys of some weird kind, utterly useless trifles for which we had given the coin of the realm. When we emerged laden with bundles the howling throng of rickshaw men, evidently realizing the weakened morale, struggled for us like fierce birds of prey.

Even greater temptation was offered by the great bazaar outside Ch'ien Mên. There jewel stalls vied with the display of brass, lacquer and ivory . . . an Arabian Night's treasure trove of sheer, dazzling wonder. The eye was caught by an egg-shaped vase, lacquer on silk, a scant four inches in height, resting on a fragile stand. We viewed incense pots of sculp-

tured onyx, snuff bottles, oddly designed, painted from within. Always some object more perfect than the last we had renounced held us—and we lingered.

As we departed those dealers who had hoped to make us meet their extortions suddenly clustered around us at the exit. They offered their wares at sums ridiculously reduced, thrusting the objects in front of us, begging for even a quarter, an eighth of the money that they had originally demanded.

Silver Street, we discovered, was a winding alley to the east of Ch'ien Mên. Forges stood there and men beat into curious shapes the white, virginal metal, more pure than sterling, but softer. Into towering pagodas, they twisted it; or slabs reared on tortoise backs, or even the celestial globes of the Observatory, upheld by three dragons standing on their tails—all with the utilitarian purpose of dispensing salt at table.

The approaching festival of Christmas brought added bustle and excitement. Early in the morning peddlers secreted themselves in our kitchen, surreptitiously stowing their wares for an all-day wait, begging for audience after tea.

On the streets vendors sold great boughs of branching mistletoe: red mistletoe, in this country of oddities. Perfect, slim leaves, berries, round, waxen—and

vermilion! No holly was to be found, nor fir; wreaths of arbor vitæ gave a funeral aspect. So mistletoe was piled in our rickshaws to decorate the house.

To the brass lanterns of my vehicle were strapped a brace of pheasants, sleek feathers agleam in the sun. Russet apples from the homeside were piled around my feet.

Hatamên market was a maelstrom of confusion during this holiday time. Live turkeys flapped in wicker baskets from which they were extracted by the wings for a customer's inspection. Weighed casually by a practiced hand, the owner of the birds announced the results in catties. The ritual of purchase necessitated the buyer's feeling of the bird's breast bone to see if the cartilage were tender. The fowl, justly indignant at this procedure, always tried to nip the offender.

Along the rafters of the market hares hung up by the ears. The carcass of a young deer dangled precariously from a pole. Oysters were heaped in great baskets. Alongside were cockles and other dubious shell fish. A flock of chickens wandered underfoot. Men shouted extortionate prices, growing apoplectic in the effort to extract double the ordinary price from

customers. Cooks wrangled venomously so that they could accrue their enormous profits in this season of "squeeze."

Beggars clustered thick as flies, horrible, demented creatures in filthy rags. The Salvation Army, solemn, uniformed Chinese, rang a bell to collect coppers for the Christmas dinner of the destitute. A Russian woman came up to us, poor, high-heeled shoes run down, face peering from beneath a shawl, a loaf of bread under her arm. Instinctively she begged for money with the gesture of the habitually unfortunate: "No beesness, mees, no chow."

The streets these evenings were dimly illumined by lights that streamed through the opaque paper of spindled lattice. Heavy doors of wadded cloth swung in front of shop entrances to keep out the cold. Rickshaw coolies, heads swathed with cloths, lurked in sheltered corners. There was a mystery of moving men softly padding down dark lanes, unexpectedly bulking from the shadows. Irregular points of *p'eng* poles stacked for the winter etched a gaunt beauty of outline against the cold sky.

A mist came, seeming to rise from the ground, a miasma of this earth, evil and very old.

Then appeared the first flurry of snow. Awakening

one morning we were astonished to see roofs were sparsely powdered, the trees were feathered. The wind tore down, whirling the snow crystals like flakes of stinging glass.

Ta-han, the Great Cold, had come.

Vendors Spread Out Their Wares.

CHAPTER XX

NEW GODS FOR OLD

Across the Bridge of Rainbow Jade opens a vista of indigo blue water. Beyond the tall marsh grasses and willows that dip to the lake's edge are the curved roofs of ancient royal temples. In all Peking it is the one expanse of extended beauty. Then walls shut in; the somber walls banding the yamens of the west city. Barracks, the modern stone buildings of officialdom loom just beyond the crumbling palaces and shrines of the old régime.

China apes the modes of the barbarian she scorned for many centuries; copies the civilization of those she had sworn to drive into the sea. *"Mieh Yang,"* was the Boxer watchword, "Exterminate foreigners!" Yet new China, phoenix-like, arises from the ashes of the Boxer holocaust.

For many years foreign influences worked insidiously to combat the violent prejudices of a people. Commerce and missionary efforts equally brought to the country a veneer of modernity. This transposition

of ideas was not entirely good, nor yet wholly evil. Traders imported matches; but also their efficiency brought cottons from English mills that caused the Chinese hand looms to cease their clacking. Missionaries gave aid to suffering thousands and at the same time by their internecine warfare spread confusion in tranquil minds that would have been content to dream into eternity.

Not far to the north of the official buildings of the new Republic, stands the cathedral of Pei T'ang, a strange memorial to Catholicism. In front are erected two pavilions with commemorative marble slabs raised on dragon-tortoise backs, similar to those that stand before the temples of the Buddha. Along the elevated platform on which the church is raised perch barking dogs who guard against the spirits of evil. Jauntily they rear themselves on their haunches. The harness holding the dangling bell on the chest is tied neatly behind with apron strings. Saints are niched in the façade; Peter with the keys of Heaven. Tall towers, attempting the perpendicular Gothic, cannot pierce the far blue sky, too distanced for their stunted reach.

Inside, the cathedral is chill and bare. It has lacked the infinity of prayers that mellowed the dim, aged churches of France. The incense, so faint that it does

not cloud the white interior, is cold. The Virgin is lonely for the vows that should be made to her. She seems not too certain that she understands those blue votive ribbons, gold-lettered in Chinese.

One woman kneels; a woman with bound feet and smoothly drawn hair. Her eyes are closed; her face expressionless. Her hands are held meticulously in the attitude of prayer—to that far, pale Virgin crowned by stars.

Always it is a story of compromise, the mingling of two elements that cannot fuse in this implanting of our faith in China. Because the Church is imminently practical, Catholicism seems more logical than other missionary efforts. Certain aspects of Chinese materialism the priests understand and meet; then let the message of their mission flower into kindness.

For the Chinese mind cannot fathom the reasons that cause a preacher to suffer the hardships in imparting the tenets of a new faith. When orphan asylums were first established for abandoned children —girl babies who had been left to die or infants there was no rice to feed in time of famine—the people believed these waifs were killed and their bodies used to transmute lead into silver. They regarded the rites of baptism and extreme unction suspiciously thinking

them the incantations of strange devils. Medical missionaries, healing the afflicted, were accused of "buying the hearts of the people." Yet even against such superstitions conversions were made.

The Catholic priests caught the Chinese psychology, meeting their stilted formality with like ceremony. By engendering respect they obtained an authority that other sects were not able to command. Adopting the rank of Chinese governor, bishops affixed a button on their caps, such as the mandarins wore. Traveling in a palanquin of state they had the number of bearers requisite to that station, together with an umbrella of honor and outriders. A cannon was discharged upon their arrival and departure.

Since the earliest days the Romanists have understood that prestige was lost by zealots who had enthusiasm but no tact, faith but no learning. In the sixteenth century under the Mings and subsequently under the Manchus the most brilliant Jesuit Fathers made a path for their preaching by commanding the attention of the court with their superior knowledge and scientific achievements. The Fathers gained the attention of the Emperor K'ang Hsi. The sovereign granted the original site for the cathedral of Pei T'ang because Father Gerbillion cured him of fever by qui-

nine, known as "Jesuit's bark." Through the influence of the priests the wife and mother of K'ang Hsi were baptized. Many of the princes acknowledged the Living God. The Emperor himself was on the verge of embracing the Christian faith.

There was one disputed point. Could ancestor worship be condoned and assimilated with the ideal conception of God the Father? The good priests were inclined to be lenient. They knew that conversions must be a process of evolution. K'ang Hsi anxious to propitiate, urged that ancestor worship was but a civil ceremony. He would not shake the foundations of the Empire, disrupt the code of his subjects by repudiating this homage due to the shades of the progenitors. The Pope, holding to the letter of the law, refused to consider this ceremony merely a sign of respect. Influenced by Dominican and Franciscan rivals of the Jesuits, he declared these practices to be idolatrous and decreed that they should be abolished before the Emperor should be considered a son of the Church.

K'ang Hsi was infuriated that a remote Pope should presume to interpret to the Chinese their own customs. Aggravated, he rejected the doctrines. His successor took pleasure in persecuting those whom K'ang Hsi had protected. But the idea of Christianity persisted

and converts came—those who were sincere enough to accept martyrdom when the moment demanded.

The walls of this cathedral close, so like the substantial walls of France, have been scarred by Boxer bullets. Three thousand Christian refugees with forty-two French and Italian soldiers sent to reinforce them, were besieged here in 1900 for two summer months. Four hundred died. The shells of the Boxers, the mines they sprang, engulfed alike the soldiers and the orphan children who were under the protection of the Sisters. More pitiful was the end of those who succumbed to starvation; or those who expired in agony, eating the bark and leaves of trees that proved poisonous. After a time the besieged learned which roots could be eaten with impunity, and it was those shrubs and trees that furnished the rations for the last days. The Sister Superior lay dying as relief came, tormented by the thought of how she could feed her flock. "To-morrow, what can I give them? But there is nothing left!"

The relief expedition entered by the Water Gate in the southern part of the city, the soldiers crawling one by one through the iron grille. This opening for the Jade Canal that issues from the city through the Legation Quarter, had run red with the blood of the

defenders. In this area, cut off from the besieged church and having no news from the outside world, the foreign population of Peking, starving and struggling from June fifteenth till August thirteenth, fought for every inch of space.

The macadamized roads of the Legation Quarter, the massive houses built in the fantastic styles of many different lands, elaborately erected with Boxer indemnity money, were not so grouped in those days. The diplomatic section was a stretch of city interspersed with Chinese dwellings, roughly barricaded with sandbags the women had sewn. This enclosure was guarded and miraculously preserved from the fanatical Boxers.

The besiegers, sensing a benign protective power that hovered above the people they were trying to destroy, fired many bullets and shells into the air. Thus they endeavored to subdue the deity that cared for the faithful under such astonishing odds. All the while the Empress Dowager stayed in her palace, temporizing, swayed now by one party, now by another. She was even saved from her own decrees. One of her advisers took the responsibility of changing a written word which made an order to the southern provinces

read that the foreigners should be protected, instead of slain, as she had commanded.

To Tzu Hsi it was a matter of preserving the dynasty. The aggressions of the Powers had during the twenty years previous to the new century, become more and more menacing. Canton, Hongkong, Shanghai, Tientsin, Wei-hai-wei, Shantung, Manchuria—all foreign cessions and concessions had been wrested by force from the Empire. When the Boxers, the Society of Harmonious Fists came into being, their enmity was directed against the Manchus. By adroit methods their vengeance was deflected and turned against all Occidentals.

These fanatics claimed to possess a secret talisman, a small piece of yellow paper which they wore on their bodies. It was lettered in vermilion with a grotesque figure, the outlines of which were made of ideographs forming the mystic inscription: "I am Buddha of the cold cloud; before me lies the deity of fire; behind me is Laotzu himself." This charm was supposed to protect them from all danger. No bullet could hurt them; no sword could penetrate the flesh. They declared themselves invincible—and they promised to drive the hated foreigners into the sea. Even the Empress Dowager learned the incantation and murmured

it seventy times daily. Each time she repeated the words the chief eunuch would shout: "There goes one more foreign devil!" Also, to make perfectly sure of ridding the Empire of the aggressors she offered a reward of fifty taels for the head of each foreigner.

Princes sponsored these bands of Boxers. They established themselves in the houses of the Manchu nobles. Rabble joined the throng; brigands augmented the numbers. During the indiscriminate burning and pillaging the property of the Chinese suffered equally with the possessions of the Europeans. A reign of terror commenced—when no one was safe.

The Boxers were also zealous in exterminating the Chinese converts to Christianity, the "Secondary Devils," as the latter were called. It was claimed that a cross, invisible to other than Boxer eyes was branded on the forehead of every Christian. Many perished because of this supposed sign. Other victims marked for death were permitted a curious trial, when the Boxers tossed balls of burning paper into the air and pretended to detect innocence or guilt in the ashes that either fell to the ground or rose powder-like on the wind.

Chinese heads, strung up by the queue were paraded

on pikes; foreign heads were tossed into cages. Any one suspected of having sympathy with the enemy or even of using foreign goods so plentifully distributed through the country, was immediately persecuted.

But in her anxiety to destroy, the Empress Dowager did not quite dare order the extinction of the Legations. Jung Lu, her nearest adviser, ever on the side of caution in dealing with the Powers, restrained her to a marked degree. During the middle of the siege, swayed by the news that the Taku forts had been captured, she reversed her former attitude of hostility and sent a present of watermelons, vegetables and ice to the Legations, saying suavely that they must be in need of cool food at this season. Afterwards the bombardment was continued with renewed ferocity.

Retribution came. Before the expeditionary force from Tientsin entered the city, the Empress Dowager fled. She went from the Forbidden City disguised as a peasant woman in blue coolie cloth, the "black cloud" of her Manchu headdress demolished, her hair smoothed to the despised lines of a Chinese coiffure.

More than a year passed before she returned. In the meantime the wheel had swung around. The reforms that she had refused to permit the Emperor Kuang Hsu she was forced to sponsor. Progress that

could not have been accomplished in a hundred years, now through discreet pressure was carried out in a short space of time. For a few brief years, due undoubtedly to the promulgation of these needed reforms, the Manchu dynasty was preserved.

Thus ironically did the persecution of the missionaries, as well as the accredited Ministers of the Powers, open China to a new life.

The temples are falling to decay; dust gathers on the gilt statues of gigantic mold. But the lonely Buddhas in the twilight of their shrines brood not on the cult of the Living God to Whom some of their people have turned. One more, among so many—for in China, all gods have been welcomed and even Marco Polo, who was but a great wanderer and a gentleman of Venice, has been canonized by the Buddhists.

The decalogue of the Jews and the teachings of Jesus did not fall so strangely on Chinese ears which had heard the precepts of Confucius and the gentle philosophy of Buddha. Long ago, in the primal days, this people worshiped but One God, a Supreme Deity, whom they named Shang-Ti. His faith continued, though the original monotheistic quality has been

effaced. Evidently he was not a jealous god. for a multiplicity of others came.

Now even the altar of Shang-Ti is deserted. Grass has crept up between the marble blocks of the Altar of Heaven, a wide, pure expanse, raised high above the earth where the Emperor knelt and viewed only the domed sky. Here he made offerings and burned incense, giving the prayers of his heart for the good of his people. Such oblations each of us has given in some form to the Supreme Being who has granted us life.

But a strange idol, half god, half demon, has come to China from the West. His doctrines infiltrating have caused absurdly fantastic things to happen. His devotees commit sartorial atrocities, costumes of curious cut and fabric; his followers twist weird meanings into our common phrases and prate of things they will not practice. An iconoclast denying reverence, demolishing ancient culture, his creed is ugliness. Supplanting all other gods, has come this godling, miscalled—Civilization.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MOON

On the last night of the old year—according to the solar calendar of the Occident—the Hôtel de Pékin was thronged.

The orchestra thrummed out-dated melodies, placidly refusing to recognize jazz. In the center of the dancing floor, reared like a javelin head, was a Christmas tree, decked with sparkling tinsel. At the small tables, a gaudy maze of color, crowded all Peking. Laughter, and the langorous wave of feathered fans; amber wine in thin-stemmed glasses; women brilliantly glittering as the baubles of the tree—this was the impression epitomized in a moment. Among the grouped foreigners we recognized every face we had encountered during the season—and others.

Who, for instance, was the slender Russian woman in silver and sable? Or that gathering of German burghers lustily shouting the songs of Alt Heidelberg? Or, indeed, the stout Polish Jew who pranced in his national polka after the manner of the exuber-

ant Sixties, and at the end of each encore kissed his partner's hand with a resounding flourish, declaring defiantly to near-by dancing couples: *Oui, c'est permis, messieurs!* To-night, it is permitted!"

Just before midnight parties dashed in from the Peking Club where they had dined *en masque*. Troubadours, Pierrots, Indians and odalisques, feminine pirates daring in their conception of the rôle . . . It was strange to recognize drab acquaintances metamorphosed into the parts life should perhaps have given them. A pince-nez-ed bacteriologist from the Rockefeller Institute blossomed into a Balkan princess. A group of solemn professors arrayed themselves as harlequins and seemed for the moment fitted to the lavender and orange garb blazoned with peacock feathers. The general air of conviviality was enhanced by vintage champagne.

For the foreigners, it was the frolic of the year.

Many Chinese were there also that evening, comprising fully a third of the gathering. They were open-mouthed, but endeavored to participate. It was plain that they loved the bizarreness of the occasion, yet followed at too great a distance to be a part of the celebration. They aped the foreigners, ludicrous in their attempts at verisimilitude.

They clustered in large groups, as if all the younger generation of one compound had come together: cousins, brothers, sisters. Some youths were clad in silken robes that went flapping through the dance; others wore evening coats reminiscent of the dress clothes of twenty years ago.

The Chinese girls were infantile creatures. A wistful insecurity in their eyes contrasted with the marked positiveness of their dancing manner. With all emotion effaced—save for an occasional, irrepressible giggle—they revolved to the stilted steps of their partners. No mutual conversation ensued when they returned to the table to sip lemonade through a straw. The men harangued earnestly among themselves; the girls furtively whispered together.

The costumes of these childlike mites coyly dallying with foreign innovations, were extremely curious. Not one permitted herself the decolleté of Western evening dress. Tight silken skirts, sometimes enlivened by extraneous wisps of chiffon, were drawn closely above the ankles, showing a grotesque imitation of a satin slipper. Equally tight jackets were shaped to a ridiculous rounded tail, much like the flirting tail of a pert sparrow. The absurd, inch-high collar, the drooping, open sleeves of this coat, recalled

to memory an antiquated boudoir sacque. Diverse were these costumes, as if some one displayed a collection of clumsily dressed dolls. The silks of French looms vied with the brocades of ancient Chinese design. Metallic threads attested to the wealth of the wearers. Crêpes were embroidered with gigantic blossoms. In the sleek ebon hair of the girls hung blooms of water lilies or jasmine flowers.

One party of Chinese arriving late in the evening, wore masquerade costumes: the gorgeous pearl and silver armor of the Sung dynasty. These were stage dresses, elaborately exquisite, used for the pretentious theatricals of wealthy amateurs. The young gallants strode in the manner of their warrior ancestors. The women in sparkling robes, hair pearl festooned, possessed a dignity that did not grace the young moderns. . . .

The lights of the ballroom were extinguished for a fleeting instant. Slowly boomed twelve ponderous strokes. Glasses were raised to toast the New Year!

Twenty-four days later, following the lunar calendar, the Chinese celebrated their New Year.

A certain gravity precedes the festival, for this is the time all accounts must be settled. A dairyman

materialized the morning before the celebration outside our servants' entrance. He howled epithets and threats of police action—all directed at the cook. Lo, much flurried by the turn of affairs making him accountable for a bill he had conveniently forgotten, neglected our tiffin while he scampered around to friends and relatives, endeavoring to collect the amount of his indebtedness. Haggard, wild-eyed, panting, he offered us a scorched dinner while the sullen fury beat at the gate and continued to shout raucous imprecations that disturbed our peace of mind as well as the cook's. Finally—although the bill was for milk consumed by some family which Lo had previously served—we restored tranquillity by paying the account.

Those who cannot pay their just debts by the last day of the last moon must expiate. . . . The noose, or an overdose of opium. . . . That final night of the old year, creditors go around with lighted lanterns. Down torturous lanes they scurry, seeking with implacable firmness the money that is their due. Nor do they extinguish the flames until far into the new day. The lighted lantern signifies the New Year has not officially commenced. The tapers are not winked out until accounts are closed—or the debtor

has admitted his insolvency and atoned—by suicide.

So all business is definitely wound up before the holiday, all affairs settled.

Many are the preparations necessary for the festival. Dwarfed plum trees, their branches twisted to fantastic forms, are cultivated for this moment, so that these "first of a thousand blossoms" may bloom on the initial day of the celebration.

On the last day of the old year each family procures a supply of water sufficient for their needs, since it is unlucky to draw water during the first three days of the New Moon. The well is sealed and a bamboo sieve is placed over the top, permitting the genius of the spring to pass in and out at will. Then the houses are cleaned, for during these early days they must not be swept lest a mite of happiness should be brushed away.

On the eve of the New Year a solemn banquet is held which all members of the family attend, even though they must come from a long distance to gather under the parental roof. Gifts are made to the children. In addition, coppers are given them for gambling money.

That night the kitchen god comes back from heaven where he has journeyed a few days previously to report on the family during the past year. A new pic-

ture of the deity is hung up by the hearth. Red candles and incense are burned before him. A complimentary scroll, lauding his bounty is read before him and then burned so that the message may be transferred in this manner to the other world. Finally, on retiring, shoes are placed soles up, a precautionary measure so that the demon of pestilence may not plant germs in them, should he happen to pass. The father of the family at last seals the doors of the house with red paper.

Firecrackers go spluttering through the night. Wee, inch-long petards in long strips explode with a fury astonishingly like volleys of rifle fire. Great cannon crackers detonate with a resounding boom.

No sleep was possible for us, surrounded by this continued fusillade. Many nights afterwards we were awakened by some tremendous report, to wonder if it were merely a festive cracker or if Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang, tired of his exile from the political arena, had followed predictions and was bombarding Peking from the hills.

On the first day of the New Year, the shops that for a twelvemonth have been continuously open, with no thought of respite, are barred. Scarlet bands, lettered in gold have been pasted across the doors; greet-

ings that read: "Life and Death, adversity and happiness are all decided by Heaven." Fringed red paper strips droop like curtains over the portals. On occasional entrances new pictures are pasted of the gate gods: two generals who had defended an ancient Emperor in his palace. Through the honor paid them by successive generations they have at last become deified. Portals are entrusted to their vigilance. Grim, distorted creatures, they brandish gigantic swords in defense of the home.

The gates of the houses that have been sealed the previous evening now are opened by the head of the family, uttering words of good omen. Inside, all kneel and make obeisance to the altars of Heaven and Earth. The women who have no direct part in the oblations to the gods, vaporize vinegar to exorcise evil spirits and banish the plague from the dwelling.

The streets are empty save for those beggars that stretch out leprous fingers, asking for alms and for food that no Chinese dare refuse in this season of feasting.

Strolling players came to our courtyard. Boys wearing stilts to imitate the bound, infinitesimal feet of Chinese women, danced before us. Other boys

paraded huge dragon masks and swished tails of feathery green paper as they performed.

Later that day a man came with a puppet show. Placing the miniature stage on high poles backed against the wall, he ranged himself and his brass gong beneath the concealing draperies.

Curious dramas he played for us, with his dolls that were Emperors, courtesans and devils. He presented one favorite New Year spectacle of the monkey worshiped as a god, the same remarkable story of many versions that used to be enacted before the Empress Dowager by her eunuchs. We viewed the episode when the monkey went far to the west to bring back a certain pig. The recalcitrant porcine creature, very realistic and a bit likeable withal, merely sniffed at the orders. So the monkey, with that diabolic cunning for which he was ever renowned, transformed himself into a beautiful maiden to entice the pig. Rather touching love passages ensued; the enamored animal was plainly ashamed of his snout and tried to rub it away to please the fastidious maiden. Finally, tiring of her coyness, he took matters into his own hands and galloped away with her slung over his back, as villains have ever done. Imagine the horror of this poor pig when he

discovered that no maiden was his prey, but that he had been carrying the hated monkey!

All this, with quavering intonation and thunderous railing the puppet man portrayed. The songs he gave in dashing falsetto. By his adroit beating of gong and cymbals he made it seem that a Chinese orchestra was concealed with him behind the curtain.

That night, the sickle of the first moon rode in the sky, a wisp of silver. . . .

For a fortnight the feasting continues. Birthdays, though they occur half a year away, are now celebrated with fitting pomp. Much gelatinous seaweed is consumed, together with sharks' fins; and ducks stuffed with pine needles roasted over an open fire. Interspersed with the viands are served many small cups of *samshu*. Gambling occupies the days—and nights. At intervals firecrackers break forth to mark some ecstatic moment in the festival and to drive away any demons that may lurk in the vicinity.

Special days during this season are observed with certain distinctions. For, throughout the year, the Chinese follow a remarkable calendar mapped by astrologers who have judiciously labeled the fortunate days. A time is appointed for peach leaves to be gathered and dried that they may be used efficaciously

in all troubles of the heart. An hour is decreed for appeasing Heaven's hunger when cakes are placed on the household altars that the gods may partake. A day is set for divination when a basket is tossed over a house to foretell the fate of the harvest. If it falls open side upwards, crops will be plentiful; otherwise a lean season will result. There is a day marked—and surely it must be lettered in red—a day propitious for catching a bandit or taking a bath!

On the fifteenth day of the first moon occurs the Lantern Festival. This date officially terminates the holiday season, although those who have money for gambling and leisure to follow the pursuit of their predilection prolong their festivities for another half month. Crowds, intent on enjoying the last moments of the celebration, thronged the street. They jostled each other in the narrow thoroughfares, tangled in the traffic streams of rickshaws and carriages, all hurrying to the pleasure quarters of Ch'ien Mên.

We also took our way to the Chinese city where lanterns were all aglow. Many-pointed prickly stars of paper, small birds and beasts, gigantic fish, gay with candles, lighted the way. The shop fronts of intricate, lacy gold dazzled like a shower of meteors. All the colors of the universe flaunted in brilliant, kalei-

doscopic confusion. It was the East, the surging, magnificent East, in holiday humor.

To mark the occasion we chose a Chinese place to feast in native fashion, the Restaurant of Ten Thousand Flaming Lotus Flowers.

By the entrance we glimpsed the kitchens, where men with bare torsos bent over the leaping fires. A murky place, a dark, smoke-blackened hole, it was. Heaping platters of strange food, prepared in curious ways lay waiting to be cooked. A cat slept peacefully on a pile of vegetables.

Beyond, lay the courtyards, drowsing in the dusk. Two gigantic lanterns, like autumn moons with characters for happiness and tranquillity inscribed in curving red strokes, emitted a dim, golden radiance. Through a maze of latticed courts we went, winding by labyrinthine open galleries painted with a hundred hues, gleaming like quiescent jewels, deserted and dream haunted. From hidden rooms screened by the opaque parchment of the façades, came the sound of the *bi-boo,* or the incredibly pitched shrieking notes of a sing-song girl.

The apartment to which we were led—for all the dining rooms of these restaurants are private—was a vast, stone-floored room with a dim fire in an inade-

quate bit of a stove. A *k'ang* was arranged as a cushioned divan. A small table stood at one side. On it rested an opium pipe.

Mirrors, huge in proportions, but dubious as to their powers of reflection, adorned the walls. Scrolls with verses from the classic poets, inscribed by some master calligrapher, hung around the room. A two-stringed fiddle, with the bow weirdly constructed inside the strings, hung waiting for the adept hand of the blind musician who would evoke the quavering melody as an accompaniment to the sing-song girl.

They brought us watermelon seeds while we waited, and small cups of steaming tea. Many servitors appeared, offering viands oddly delicious. Platters of shredded chicken browned in balls; ovals of crisped, minced pork; fish that was dipped in egg were successively served. With these delights of the *gourmet* came the pale, yellow rice wine, hot from pewter teapots and the more potent spirits, colorless, triple distilled that were poured from small flagons the curious shape of a T'ang bronze vase into thimble-small cups. Salads, sea prawns, a bewildering array of marvels were placed before us, course after course that tickled our palates experimentally until we were tempted by some new surprise. Cakes were like snowballs flaked

with crystals, but doughy and glutinous until the teeth penetrated to the jelly-filled interior.

Just beyond our apartment came the sound of an ancient lute, and a girl's voice raised in song. At some moments it was plaintive as the wail of a friendless ghost harrying a mortal soul, weirdly terrible as a cry of anguish. It shrieked to shrillness, appalling as the vibrations of an untuned fiddle.

According to the customs of their ancestors, we knew that beneath the veneer of Western importations, the Chinese kept the lantern feast of the New Year.

CHAPTER XXII

DANCE OF THE WHIRLING DEVILS

At the hour of the Tiger which is dawn in the cycle of time, we started for a temple beyond the north city walls.

Out An-Ting Gate we traveled, past a long file of camels loaded with brick tea for the Mongolian steppes. Mud houses huddled along the route where the caravan drivers from the far fastness of the plains stop for steaming food. At the wayside a man skinned a sheep, the animal newly slaughtered by a gash across the throat.

We passed frozen streams with gaunt willow trees aligned sparsely against a bleak, cold sky. Before us these interminable plains stretched to infinity. The road we followed ceased to be a road and became but a vague track across the dun-colored waste. A thin trickle of pilgrims traversing the desert space indicated the way. An old woman perched cross-legged on the back of a trotting donkey; blind beggars led by wan, pitiful children; blue-hooded Peking carts jolt-

ing over the hardened ruts, all wended a serpentine path over the flat expanse to the dim rose walls of a vast temple.

It was the thirteenth day of the First Moon. At this time the Lama priests of the ancient monastery, Huang Ssu, the Yellow Temple, drive the demons from their sanctuary by means of fantastic dances. Monks, garbed to represent devils, harry the invisible powers of darkness. Rushing from the shrine, whirling in gyrations of fanatical fury, they are supposed to make contortions so terrible that they exorcise the pernicious evil spirits that have been daring enough to lurk in the precincts during the past year.

Our Number One Boy whom we had taken as interpreter brushed past the mendicant priests at the gate, and we entered a huge courtyard. Vendors fried pinkish pork over charcoal braziers; others sold whirligigs, multicolored pinwheels; or a hundred sugar plums crowded on sticks the length of fishing rods. The court had the aspect of a temple fair.

Monks gathered around us—not barring the entrance, but dickering over the price to be paid for our admission. Momentarily the group increased, each protesting hand to be appeased by a bit of silver.

The financial transactions concluded, the monks,

with determined hospitality, escorted us across the court. Scores of children followed. They had gathered to see the temple demons but now appeared to be immeasurably more diverted by these foreign devils who had come into their midst. One lad smiled tentatively—I returned the smile. There echoed a chorus of delighted chuckles. We proceeded hilariously—children, monks and even a cordon of police who at our arrival had caught up their stacked rifles and trailed along in the rear as a guard of honor.

Past the cells of the monks we marched, through many abandoned courtyards, beyond the ruins of the palace that had housed the supreme prelate of the faith, the Dalai Lama. The monks disputed ceaselessly about the matter of precedence—who should be permitted to take our fur motor robes, or carry my kodak, in which all evinced great interest.

Finally, through the branches of the trees shone the marble of a great stupa. A towering cone of white vaulted into the sky. Inexpressibly beautiful is the exotic form of this memorial tomb.

The dirty fingers of the monks pointed to the sculptured figures around the base. A Dalai Lama, visiting Peking, had died of smallpox. Ch'ien Lung, the monarch, was overcome by grief. He caused the body

of the priest to be sent back to Thibet in a golden casket. Over the infected vestments of the prelate he erected this *chorten* of purest white marble. An inconsolable lion wiped away tears with a clumsy paw. The soul of the Lama ascended to the Western Paradise. The tale is all there, graphically carved that those who pass may read.

On our return to the main courtyard we found that the monks had roped off a tremendous section for the performance of the Devil Priests. The hour at which they appear is never revealed in advance. We conceded the wisdom of this. The affair must be arranged so secretly that the evil spirits, caught unawares, will shrivel with fear and like dry aspen leaves go whirling away, impelled by the fiery breath of the purgers of the temple. . . . An hour passed, then two, then three—and we waited.

We watched a fight in the court between a mongrel dog and a black pig. Monks in yellow robes, a file of soldiers with fixed bayonets, children, all gathered about the combatants, cheering impartially, first the pig, then the *wonk*. Lamas from distant temples arrived. Pompous abbots in golden-topped hats and long robes of mink edged their way to gaze at the spectacle. Wilder grew the attacks of the pig. Fierce

tusks tormented the dog. The canine tore around the circle in desperate flight, pursued steadily by the awkward, galloping pig, grunting ferociously. Faster flew the dog gaining until he followed his pursuer. Then spying a gap, he darted between legs, brushed by brocaded robes, broke from the mass and streaked across the court.

More people came. Men were there from the hinterland in baggy, sack-like tunics and high boots with pointed, up-curved toes. From Thibet, they had traveled and from the steppes of Mongolia. They appeared gigantic men of primitive strength, lowering, ominous beside the dwellers of the city.

Peking carts lined one side of the courtyard. Horses were tethered in a corner. On the shafts of the vehicles, placed to view the spectacle perched Manchu women, elaborately painted with vermilion. Some had brought babies with them, infants dressed to represent the animal presiding over the year in which they were born.

One wee mite of a baby who toddled fearlessly over to us was born in the Year of the Pig. For this reason his shoes were fashioned like the porcine body, the toes ending in an adorable rosy snout. Ears stuck

up in a rakish attitude; a wisp of a tail trailed behind each foot as the infant walked.

Another child crowed and stretched out arms to me. He was a boy and an only son—so the mother made me understand. Very precious and likely to be tormented by the spirits of evil, therefore he was disguised as a tiger child. A padded cloak of yellow, spotted with black, enveloped the plump body until he could have been bounced and would have responded with the resilient force of a rubber ball. From the hooded bonnet of his wrap grinned a ferocious tiger face. Its glaring eyes and bristling whiskers would assuredly terrorize any demon intent on mischief. Besides, what malevolent spirit would bother to attack a little tiger cub? Only in search of the baby sons of men do they haunt the ways.

Always to the baffled Western mind comes the interrogation: if the devils are so blatantly stupid as to be thus easily fooled, why do the people trouble to propitiate them? The question is unanswerable. The Celestial, without stopping to reason, continues to follow the formulas prescribed by priests who are half magicians. This child's head was shaven into the form of a crown with a lock over the forehead. Five hairs were braided into a ridiculous strand, tied with

THE SACRED ANIMALS OF BUDDHA.

a bit of red string, for he must wear some distinguishing mark, lest he meet with an untimely death in passing the thirty barriers of childhood.

Presently, while we waited a monk beckoned for us to follow. Through the mob, past the barriers that struggling hordes tried to batter down, he led us to an inner court. With a few Manchus we were admitted to a service in a chapel.

The doors were barred, enfolding the dim sanctuary in shadows. Nine great figures were ranged at one side; the arahats in the poses of eternal meditation gazed into the ineffable bliss of their Nirvana. On the walls in tones of blurred green and rose and glinting metal, was depicted the lotus lake of paradise with rigid, haloed saints enthroned in lily petals.

Before the statue of the Maitreya—he who is yet to be born—blazed a hundred tapers floating in cups of almond oil.

From the dusk of the chapel, illumined by this radiance, gleamed the Living Buddha. Multitudinous offertory flames lighted his countenance into a living fire. Slenderly encircled by licking darts his yellow robe shimmered like concentrated light. Emblazoned with transcendent fire the tall miter shone as if formed of molten gold.

He who is a God Incarnate sat on his throne before the altar in perfect immobility adoring the Spirit of the Resurrection. His child face, thinly oval, was serene. Eyes, studiously intent, held a strange peace for his fifteen years. One hand was lifted in meditative prayer.

In the darkened sanctity of the chapel helmeted monks in saffron with necklaces of amber and turquoise gathered around the Living Buddha. Like glints from a ball of fire radiated the lesser brothers, monks with scarlet togas draped over ocher cassocks; monks in gaudy orange, or murky crimson, or mulberry, a marvelous assembly of deepening color. Beads dropped noiselessly through their fingers as they told their mute prayers.

A low cavernous tone rumbled through the silence. Fifty voices took up the chant. Like a vast, roaring tidal wave the litany swelled. "Amitá, Amitá, Amitá—" United in exhortation of the potent deity of their faith, they called ceaselessly, hands pointed in an attitude of prayer. The acolytes swung silver censers; the abbot waved aromatic incense sticks until the air was empurpled with smoke and the chapel seemed to float in space like a mystic dream.

"Amitá, Amitá, Amitá—" they implored, battering

at the very gates of paradise with raucous, incessant voices, the tempo quickening to the intensity of frantic haste. "Amitá, Amitá!"

The Living Buddha knelt with uncovered head. His magnificent robes rustled with the faint clinking of precious metal as he dropped from his throne to adore the god of whom he was the fleshly counterpart.

Abruptly the monks flung themselves down, beating the ground with their foreheads. As they rose unrhythmically, and countless times prostrated themselves again, the chapel became alive with hurricane fury, a wild frenzy of uplifted arms, waving cloaks, twisting togas. Exultantly, with incredible speed, they repeated the sacred name.

A bell with a silver clarion note tinkled in the hands of the Living Buddha.

The mass . . . Yet a glance at the faces of the men who prostrated themselves with such ferocity aroused a shuddering sense of difference. It seemed as if these distorted rites were actually the black mass —devil worship.

As we left the shrine and passed from the inner courts a shriek halted us suddenly. It tore through the minor sounds as a comet crashing through space. An inhuman call of fear, a jagged, piercing note like

a jackal's snarl sped a quiver of apprehension through those who heard it. The weirdly grewsome yells rose to screeching frenzy, then shrank to growled defiance.

A monk faced a blank wall. His fists were raised in impotent, trembling rage. His body cringed.

The brothers led him away, exhorting his frightened soul to peace. His eyes were vacuous with the stare of the mad who see visions that we dare not imagine. The devils we did not credit, and admit only in symbolic form, had through intense concentration been made tangible to him.

The huge outer courtyard during the four-hour span of our wait had become unbearably thronged; five thousand were there, or more probably ten. It was impossible to estimate the shifting crowds. Perceiving an ancient banner holder in the midst of the court we climbed to that place of vantage. Successive tiers of stone were elevated to a height of some three yards and here above the multitude we ensconced ourselves. Scores of Manchus thronged about our feet, standing wedged on rickety boards from which they had improvised a platform. Monks immediately swarmed to collect tribute for our position. More monks ran to offer us cups of steaming tea. Under the

gray, frigid sky through which the sun could not force its feeble rays, still we waited.

At the temple steps loitered priests magnificently garbed, the pale gold of their robes embroidered in slanting rainbow rays. Interminably they conversed, as if all eternity might be passed in such dalliance.

A man brushed through the crowd, hastening towards us, fighting his way with visible excitement. I recognized one of the brothers who had guided us through the monastery in the earlier hours, although he now was garbed in a weird, parti-colored gown, dark satin embroidered in a hundred hues. In his hand he carried the gigantic mask of a ferocious animal, crowned with a diadem of miniature human skulls.

"I am the Sacred Cow," explained the monk through the interpretation of our Number One Boy. The Boy added: "He say he wantchee you make picture with machine."

The priest posed, setting the tremendous bullock's head upon his shoulders. Curiously the fantastic colors blended with his variegated robe, giving him the appearance of some mythological beast. Lifted at a pleading angle the open jaws seemed to beg me mutely.

My perch was advantageous. I doubted if I could clamber down and up again through the mob of waiting Manchus. I hesitated.

The bullock waved hands in entreaty.

"He say he Sacred Cow of Buddha," the Boy insisted. "No can do dance if he not there—and he no go till you make picture."

I accomplished the feat, desperately anxious that the performance should finally begin. The Sacred Cow haggled over cumshaw, accepted a sandwich from our lunch box and ran back to his companions.

At last the passive group on the steps, as if slowly awakening from centuries of somnolence, stirred and descended.

Two devils—the famous devils who were to terrorize the crowd and put the malevolent spirits to flight—sauntered aimlessly across the court. One smoked a cigarette and paused to inhale the last puff before he put on his mask. These enormous headpieces were white with protruding, stubby horns jutting at intervals from the swollen skull. The apparel of the devils was a suit of white with red flames painted on their legs. Grotesquely distorted they resembled nothing so much as deep-sea divers.

Then followed the animals of Buddha's army;

snakes with leering fangs, an elephant, an antlered stag. One bird had a gigantic beak that projected directly from the top of his skull, for the monk wore the mask casually tilted back on his head. A wavering pageant of multicolored silks, fantastic disguises, they passed.

Small, ragged acolytes beat great drums with sickle-shaped sticks. Two horns, more than a dozen feet in length came next, the front ends of the instruments supported by children. These gigantic trumpets emitted a hoarse, minor note, much like a distant enfeebled foghorn. Conch shells were blown in weird cadences. Piping reeds blended to a thin, wailing dirge. Cymbals clashed.

There followed on through the arched doorway of the temple a palanquin, borne by thirty men. Yellow as the sun, the very source of light is yellow, it struck the retina of the eye like a swiftly sped arrow.

Inside was enthroned the youth who was the Incarnation of Buddha. Immobile, expressionless, he sat like an idol sculptured from ancient ivory. On his knees rested a statue of many colors, Amitahba, the god the temple enshrined as protector.

Beside the palanquin slowly paced two abbots in voluminous saffron robes that billowed about them.

They wore the high, fringed helmet of plush, shaped identically like the headgear of Roman legionaries. In one curved arm each carried a bronze begging bowl, symbol of his order. The other hand held an iron-ringed crozier.

Out flashed the leather thongs of whips. Monks beat the masses with curling strokes. Back cringed the crowd, only to surge again around the palanquin like the ceaseless waves of a tumbling sea.

Wending through the temple courts, out by the barren fields the processional crawled at a snail's pace. Censers swung, issuing forth the breath of homage, myrrh, sandalwood and musk, the exotic fragrance of the East. Rice was flung in great handfuls, a benediction to the faithful. Led by the eerie minor harmonies of the pipes and blare of melancholy horns, the file of dignitaries accomplished the circle and again returned to the great court.

Before the palanquin, now raised on the temple steps, a priest lifted a bunch of peacock feathers from a delicate, jug-like vase and sprinkled the worshipers with the sacred wine.

At a signal of the lugubrious trumpets, the Devils danced. Around they moved, feet lifted high in irregular steps that had no relation to the beat of the

drums. Bending forward, darting backward, they revolved interminably. The dance resembled no other, although some of the postures were grotesquely reminiscent of war dances—or a crude sailor's hornpipe. Priests in the pale gold and rainbow robes with the clumsy beast masks on their shoulders, took up the rotating steps.

The crowd broke through the lines of soldiers and policemen and became a swirling, shifting conglomeration that pressed around the beasts and devils. Priests flung missiles of white, chalky substance that tore through the air for a space and then broke into a stinging, peppery dust that blinded the eyes, choked the throat and powdered the garments of the people. But the worshipers shielded their faces with their arms and pressed on. Even the whips that cracked like a volley of petards were ineffectual now.

One small bonze in his rust-colored robe had drawn over his face a devil's mask such as the vendors at the gates were selling. With the gleeful strokes of a tormentor confident in his righteous superiority, he lashed a spectator, an urchin of his own age. But the Chinese imp was no respecter of the sacred brotherhood and turned upon the infant monk with pugnacious fists. The tiny acolyte tried for an in-

stant to defend the dignity of his cloth with violent retaliatory lashes. Then, perceiving that no supernatural power would aid him, the little Lama turned and fled ignominously, burrowing as the vanquished dog had done, into the crowd.

A mob of struggling blue figures still surged in kaleidoscopic masses around the dancing priests. Futile this pushing and jostling seemed from the elevation of our post. They were like crawling insects in perpetual, meaningless motion. Impelled as they were by some strange force it seemed as if the evil spirits evicted by the Devil Priests had taken refuge in these human bodies. The shuffling feet of a multitude raised a thin film of dust that ascended into the air not unlike the smoke of incense.

From the sky, like the faint, frozen tears of a far deity, who from his heights gazed down on the folly of men, drifted sparse flakes of snow.

CHAPTER XXIII

SPRING

According to Chinese tradition, Spring comes to the earth on the twelfth day of the First Moon—approximately February fourth by our solar calendar. These predictions, established by the precedent of a thousand years of records, are believed to be infallible. But the Chinese are unduly optimistic.

On this day appointed by the almanac, farmers plant a hollow bamboo stalk two feet deep in the soil and drop a feather down the cavity. By the hour that the feather floats upwards, when the thaw causes an air current to project it into the upper spaces, they gauge the time of their plowing and sowing. For the tillers of the soil think that the "earth turns over" at this season.

To us, only the ducks flying north in wedge-shaped formation to the marshes of Manchuria, gave any promise of a break in the bleak cold. That, and the unfortunate predilection of the servants to consume

new garlic at the moment that it reached the market from the south.

A month later, on the eighth day of the Second Moon, the Confucianists officially recognized the advent of Spring with oblations. It seemed as if they thus endeavored to keep alive their hope through a space of sterile, bitter weather.

To witness the vernal services held in honor of the Sage we journeyed to a school in the West City. There we were welcomed by a scholar of philosophic dignity. His wrinkled face was given added solemnity by horn-rimmed spectacles, ever the distinguishing mark of the literatus. His sparse beard was trimmed to a lengthy triangle. Over his everyday Chinese robes he wore a long, white garment edged with black. On his head was poised a stiff-crowned cap that gave him a pontifical air.

In carefully enunciated words that he had acquired at an American university, class of '06, the scholar begged us to enter his office. He was the leader, we later learned, of the New Confucianism, a movement that was started to repudiate modern tendencies and revive the ancient veneration and worship of the Sage. The present government of the Republic had leaned dangerously toward Sovietism. So instead of making

sacrifice with the officials at the great Temple of Confucius, this group held their own simple, austere rites.

The office of the scholar was a small, severe room. On the walls hung scrolls with huge ideographs painted with faultless pen strokes. Other inscriptions had been copied from monuments by the method used in China since ancient times—that of rubbing the carving with lampblack and then transferring the impression on to paper. Frequently shaven pates of mischievous children poked in the doorway. Minute padded figures advanced and then whisked away, chuckling. Under the care of this scholar some two hundred of these infants were being educated according to the standards of antiquity, deriving their first knowledge from the Classics which the Chinese consider the source of all learning.

A gong beat. Small boys marshaled by instructors filed into the court and lined up on either side. In the center space matting had been placed on the ground with occasional red cushions at intervals. Here attending fathers and friends gathered. With much deprecatory bowing the places were finally arranged by rank and seniority. The men took off their mufflers (perhaps symbolically in honor of Spring)

and hung them on the branches of the tiny plum trees, faintly tipped with green from the rising sap.

At the head of the company, our friend the scholar in his white and black robes took his place.

Before him—elevated on a platform—was a table arranged as an altar. On it stood the tablet of Confucius, carved sandalwood, lettered in gold. Before this were placed more than a score of dishes with the sacrifice—millet, cuts of meat, fish, raw and dried, vegetables and goblets of golden rice spirit.

The voice of a youth, astonishingly thunderous for one of his years, intoned syllables of metallic resonance, like a copper bell striking with spaced, ringing strokes. At his behest thrice three times all the men kow-towed. Falling to their knees on the red cushions, with the skirts of their robes spread carefully in front of them, they bowed their heads, touching the earth. Between kow-tows the children chanted the sacred odes to the wheezy notes of a hand organ—all thoroughly out of unison and out of tune.

The scholar advanced to the altar, reading a laudatory scroll. Then he lighted the paper from a candle flame. With measured steps, out into the garden, the blazing message was carried. There the fire was quenched with a goblet of rice wine.

Thus was the sacrifice accomplished according to ancient rites.

Although Spring was ceremoniously greeted by the literati, the Yellow Wind, clouding the heavens, still carried dust particles far out to sea, lodging Gobi sand in the furled sails of fishing vessels with the force of its terrific violence. Kites dazzled the sky. Great dragons rode on the swift spring gales. Aloft, a host of gigantic, mythical birds swarmed like a menacing host.

Then opaque skies warmed to sudden blue. The sun that thawed the earth drew the people from their houses with the force of a magnet. Gypsies strolled down Hatamên Street, flaunting voluminous skirts, dangling rings of heavy gold in their ears. An alien race, remote from the immobile Chinese, they seemed indeed the harbingers of a gayer, brighter season.

New calls sounded clarion clear through the sun-filled air. Men sauntered down alleys with stalks of sugar cane. Eagerly babies reached out for the sweet. In exchange for a penny "small money," the mothers bought a great joint to suck alternately with the offspring in their arms. Hawkers swinging great wooden tubs suspended from a pole across their shoulders offered goldfish for sale. Myriad mites of glint-

ing copper sleekly swam through the water as the vendors jogged along with the peculiar step of the burden carriers. Spotted fish, flicking multiple, filmy tails, cocked a cynical eye at the purchaser as they were dipped from the tub into the glass bowl where they were destined to reside. Placing his portable stove by the wayside a man coiled molasses candy. Working with incredible rapidity he inflated a strand and with a few deft touches fashioned it into an antlered stag, or a horse with a rider astride. These figures were perfect in their resemblance to those designed by early Chinese painters. Spindled legs, smooth, stiff flanks and jutting heads, the animals were identical with the fauna on the scrolls of the T'ang dynasty.

Coming from the country regions small donkeys trotted through the streets of the capital. Around their shaggy, gray necks hung strings of carven bells. Bits of bright enamel enhanced their harness. Traveling from greater distances galloped horses, gayly caparisoned. Saddles of brilliant red leather rested on long saddlecloths of figured carpet. From gaudy straps hung suspended curiously shaped stirrups of chiseled iron.

High-booted Mongols left these mounts and strode

A Temple Fair, Lung-fu Ssu.

through the city with the determined, heavy tread of men covering long spaces. Along Ch'ien Mên they swaggered in garments of rust color and tangerine, dusty gold or scarlet. Over these full-pleated robes tied about the waist with a girdle they sometimes wore a short upper jacket of saffron. Peaked hats of fur with irregular brims, decorated with strips of gold braid were tilted over faces like wrinkled parchment. They brought the mink and marmot skins they had trapped to market, there to trade for the commodities of civilization.

Once, mingling with the throngs of a temple fair, I saw a Mongol woman. Vivid red were her garments, swathing her body in a hundred folds. Above her squat features she wore a coif of dingy green cloth like a low coil of a turban. Heavy earrings of silver studded with turquoise fell to her shoulders.

Outside the gates of Lung-fu Ssu she stood while the crowds eddied about her. It was the market of birds at which she gazed, exotic creatures feathered in crimson and blue. Parrakeets, white toucans with pale golden beaks swung on their bars, emitting screeching cries. Small songsters chirped in their osier prisons. With wide, steady eyes focused on the birds she neither moved, nor seemingly breathed. Ab-

sorbed in these marvels, she sought no further wonders.

It was the season of fairs. Beyond the temple gates thousands swarmed in the ancient, dilapidated courts. Every conceivable object was displayed for sale, a kaleidoscopic mass of shifting color.

Chinese women fingered velvet petaled flowers for their hair, flicking the blossom expertly to see if the attached butterfly of chenille fluttered in a manner true to life. Others lingered before booths with toys for children and bought miniature cranes flying in realistic attitudes, suspended from a stick by a string. Minute figures in old stage costumes danced on a brass disk impelled by the vibrations of a tapping piece of bamboo wood. Baskets were piled high; dusters of cock's feathers projected perilously into the sky.

Booths stretched interminably through the courts, covered by flapping lengths of coolie cloth. There were shown huge ribbon bows to form the Manchu headdress, the "black cloud." Marriage candles of beautifully sculptured wax glowed with the red color of happiness. Eggs pickled in lime crumbled, revealing a moldy green interior. Swaying aloft on sticks was cake cut in the shape of lotus leaves and studded with raisins.

A fortune teller collected a large audience as he foretold the life events of one startled individual. With a writing brush the soothsayer drew delicate characters on a strip of yellow paper, casting a horoscope. Or, shaking a box of divining sticks, flat and round, he earnestly gave advice on some moot point.

On an elevated space two wrestlers vied in a trial of strength, their great, muscled torsos stripped. Afterwards they roared out the virtues of a medicine that had presumably given them such prowess and sold small packages of this force-producing elixir, wrapped in a paper charm.

At night, the flaring lights of the fairs at Ch'ien and Hata Gates distorted the immobile faces of the Chinese to grotesque diablerie. It seemed as if all the cupidity, the cross currents of passion, crept up through the impassive exterior and stood revealed with demoniac clarity. . . . Those who bartered, selling or buying, exposed their lust and their desire —changing coppers for greasy pork, bean curd, or slices of gigantic radishes the size of melons.

A beggar woman sat by the roadside, playing a tune on a penny whistle. The flickering shadows cast her into a shape of loathsome horror, an animal of prey, crouching to spring.

Alone undistorted by shifting lights were five blind musicians. Having earned their dole they were led away into the dim, gray spaces by a small guide. With the cautious precision of the sightless, they moved, each with a hand on the shoulder of the man in front of him. Each carried an instrument, a lute, a drum of python skin, a triangle of bells, a two-stringed fiddle and a harp. Their countenances which had shown the anguish of the tortured, were now smoothed to resignation and abiding peace as they shuffled away and became silhouettes against the faint, silvery tranquillity of the moonlight.

These warm days did more than coax people swarming to the fairs. Approving the clement weather, tramcars ventured out for the first time in the city of Peking. They were bedizened trolleys, adorned with paper roses and streamers of yellow, red and violent greens. Frilled, ruffled and bedecked with enormous flags of the Republic, they came forth at midnight on a practice run. Furtively they crept up and down in front of the Hôtel de Pékin.

By early morning a huge crowd had collected, impeding their progress. Rickshaw coolies jeered and cursed and spat at their arch-enemy. The motormen, inordinately proud in their lively uniforms, ran the

The Market of Feather Dusters.

cars forward and back for the space of a few feet, just to demonstrate to the multitude that it could be done. Speeches were made by the officials of the line. Toasts were offered. Those responsible for this innovation clambered aboard. Jerkily they rode off. The reduced rate of six coppers was extended for this day. Flocks of Chinese hopped on, clinging to every available inch of space, suspending themselves from the steps and platforms. A dozen climbed on the roof, oblivious of the danger of electrocution. So, for the first time, a tram rumbled through the historic gate of Ch'ien Mên.

In spite of these signs of brighter weather, it was not until the festival of Ching Ming that we were definitely assured of spring. This is the Chinese Arbor Day, when they plant trees to renew sparse, depleted groves. Also it is the day that demons come back to earth. To propitiate these spirits the people journey to the graves and temples to burn paper money. All day carts went rumbling through the city with silver and gold tinsel *sycee* festooned over the hoods. Those recently bereaved wore the white robes of mourning. Sometimes a bit of color, red heels of slippers or blue bands, indicated the degree of relationship with the dead who had gone beyond.

Out at the Taoist temple, Ch'eng Huang Miao, the crowds came to light incense sticks before small, pathetic gods wrapped in folds of orange cloth. Figures of paper they brought in memory of the departed. The chime of gongs came from many altars, blending to a sweet rhythm. Vendors offered budding plum branches for sale and the air was redolent of myrrh and blossoms.

The skies were fair that day and we took this for a propitious omen. If at a certain hour the wind should blow, the Chinese say it is a sign that for seven more weeks we would be tormented by blustery gales. But no breath stirred. At last the wind was lulled.

The willows were tinged with faint yellow green. The sun warmed to amber light. It was April, nearing our festival of Easter. Spring, so frequently heralded by the Chinese, finally had come.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PRINCESS OF THE COLORED CLOUDS

STRUGGLING masses surged through Hata Gate. As a mob fleeing from a doomed city, they fought and bellowed in the frenzied exodus. Carts and rickshaws, wheelbarrows and water trucks met with locked wheels. Cursing at the impediments men extricated their vehicles and hastened on. Through the throngs pedestrians darted, stampeding asses laden with heavy burdens, hurling themselves in front of bewildered horses.

Beyond the confines of the gate the traffic stream broadened and swept along the steep road to the east. Between the gray, canyon-like house walls the human torrent poured turbulently as a mountain river. At the great doors groups of women watched, lifting up babes to behold the processional. Young girls chattered with the shrillness of monkeys commenting on the passers-by.

Not in search of gold, traveled these masses. Nor were they on pleasure bent. The most potent of quests

led them on. It was the same yearning of primal man that first impelled him to bow his head before the elements and fashion crude gods from his own imagination that he might beg salvation of them. Now seeking the life eternal hastened these thousands!

To the altar of the Princess of the Colored Clouds they pressed on. The lame, the blind, the ancient and the young, all thronged. A file the length of many *li* broadened to a whirling, chaotic multitude as they reached the temple by the sluggish canal.

This shrine where the goddess bestows blessings on those that petition her is known as the P'an T'ao Kung, the "Palace of Trained Peach Trees." For in Chinese lore the peach is the symbol of longevity, the Fruit of the Tree of Life. On the third day of the Third Moon occurs this feast of the Immortals. In paradise the privileged ones sup on rare viands, monkeys' lips, humming bird's wings and dragon's livers. Those who have been virtuous are permitted at death to gather a peach from the celestial orchard of the "Queen Mother of the Western Heaven" and join this company. While the gods depicted in the temple frieze, together with the happy souls who have gained heaven, feast and rejoice at their good fortune, those left on earth implore their mercy. Especially

they supplicate the patron goddess of paradise in whose hands rests the giving of the mystic peach.

Triple are the blessings the Princess of Rainbow Clouds bestows on her worshipers. She grants long life. She gives posterity to carry on the line, thus transmitting an earthly immortality from flesh to flesh. Greatest of boons, she accords life eternal.

Hordes besieged the temple of the Princess of the Colored Clouds, swirling in mad battle. Conscious, for this moment, of their ultimate destruction, they frantically sought to avert calamity as if it were imminent by a hair's breadth. They swarmed around the entrance gate, fighting for place. Flinging copper coins into the begging baskets of the priests, they struggled to the altar.

Incense packs flared in gigantic burners, licking the air with menacing arrows of flame. Swiftly lighting one brand after another a priest ceaselessly doled torches to the worshipers. His hair and shoulders were powdered with fine, gray incense dust; his eyelashes fringed with clinging particles. His eyes were reddened from the stifling blue smoke pall. Yet he dared not slacken his ministrations. A hundred women's hands reached up to him, imploring that their offerings might be lighted.

With these blazing torches women prostrated themselves before the shrine three times. Jerkily in their hands the flames were inclined to the deity. Smoldering, half-extinguished incense packs were dashed to the pavement where paper wrappings were thrown in accumulating heaps. Then the women struggled on, bearing aloft more fiery incense to place at other altars.

For though this was a festival where all might beg for immortality the thronging women had immediate supplications that they wished granted. Old, haggard crones tottered to implore a few more years added to their life span. Others prayed that the goddess might spare their beauty and let time pass gently over them. Young wives offered tiny images of babies. The Princess was asked to give them in return a living child. Tossing copper coins into the hands of twin naked boy children, they bowed in hasty prayer. Ever for children they begged. At this shrine where crowded Peking's multitudes in numbers countless as the sands of the sea, still they asked for sons—more and yet more sons to people China.

In the court, shrouded by a mat covering, the air became opaque. Massed figures moved dimly, veiled by heavy clouds of blue. Constantly the great echo-

ing tones of the prayer gong resounded, struck by an acolyte with ponderous strokes. To the goddess embowered in her symbolic peach blossoms, a pyre of flaring torches was raised. Higher leaped the flames.

Asking so much, giving so little, these masses epitomized human desire. For eternity, they hurriedly thrust a burning pack of incense sticks and went on their way.

Beyond, under the trees of the inner court, a holy man sat in a trance-like immobility. His hands open in his lap held a reed begging bowl. The coppers that fell caused no flicker of his eyelids. In his habit of Taoist priest, the robes of faded blue coolie cloth, the stiff cylindrical cap crowning his head, he was plainly one who had renounced the world. It seemed he had attained perfect tranquillity through the devotion to a cult. To him eternity was the moment in which he lived. Already he was merged in the great nothingness.

Around him the crowd milled. . . . Finished now was their barter for paradise. Assured of their place in the mystic orchard of the Princess of the Colored Clouds, they avidly sought the joys of the present moment. Pleasures had been arranged to entice them. They hastened on.

A vast, irregular terrain of hillocks and hollows stretched far into the distance. It was covered with blue figures like a crawling army of ants. A hundred thousand swarmed before us as we went along the way, roughly indicated by a string of chow stands offering weird food for sale.

The race course was the destination. Through a cleft hill the circular track was roughly hewn. Thousands were massed at every vantage point, forming a solid ring of figures, topping the perilous cliffs, fringing the plains. Tea houses of mat construction had been erected at one point. Sliding down a precipice, walking an unsteady plank, we attained an exclusive place of entertainment. From a table in the front row we overlooked the course.

Around us gathered prosperous Chinese merchants with their wives and progeny, drinking countless cups of tea and munching watermelon seeds. Manchus, with blasé, fatigued faces distinctly showed an air of race. Mongol chieftains wrapped in soiled, saffron robes displayed their wealth by newly purchased coral buttons and jewels set in hammered gold. All were intent on the spectacle before them.

Along the track floundered a horse. A shaggy, Mongol pony, he lifted his forefeet in staccato, per-

A Taoist Priest in Trance-like Immobility.

pendicular motion. Solidly built, but speedy, he came on steadily with a certain snorting ferocity. On his back rode an old man with horn-rimmed spectacles, clenching the silver-mounted reins with grim tenacity. His pale brocaded robes swished in the wind. His queue waved; the horse's long tail with silken streamers of crimson and peacock flashed as they passed by. The carved brass harness bells jangled fiercely in the flight. A volley of applause broke from the gallery. Then horse and rider disappeared behind the barrier of tea houses that hid the curving track.

A horse with a white forelock standing erect in agitation next heaved into view. His heavy, unclipped sides were flecked with foam. Ponderous feet dug deep and spattered mud. He was like a Percheron with the gait of a centipede. Above a saddle of scarlet leather and a saddlecloth of gayly designed carpet perched a lean septuagenarian with intent, wild eyes, riding with the primitive seat of the Mongolian plainsman. Sturdily his feet in high, bright boots gripped the stirrups of ornate iron.

A succession of horses followed. All were caricatures, mirth-provoking spectacles. Some were ridden by dapper young lieutenants from Mukden; a

few by noncommissioned cavalry officers from the north. For the most part the incongruous jockeys were Mongols, fantastically garbed. It seemed probable they were a remnant of the headmen of the plains who had always come to Peking in the springtime to show their horses and pay allegiance to the Emperor.

Cavorting around the circle they came, much as if they were displaying the speed and trappings of the horse rather than participating in an actual race, as we understand the trial. Occasionally a Peking cart trundled past for no particular reason—unless it was to show the grimly extended teeth of the mule tugging wickedly at the bridle.

The afternoon slipped away. We left this spectacle in order to see the circus, also established in honor of the devotees who worshiped the Princess of the Colored Clouds. One tent exhibited a human spider. In a cobweb rested the tenuous, fairy feelers of a gigantic bug, surrounding a woman's face. It was a trick of mirrors, but the sensation produced was eerie. The immobile Chinese regarded it steadily with a fixed fascination, making no comment. It would have been curious to have known how many believed it to be a phenomenon of nature. Most of them probably.

The faces displayed the intent blankness that is assumed to hide emotion.

Farther on we crowded into a circus ring. A man placed a bench for us in the front ranks where the heavy show ponies came perilously near to treading on our toes as they loped around.

In the center of the ring gathered all the circus family. No one was in fanciful costume, but the younger women wore gay silks, ragged from long usage. Babies crawled on the ground; children practiced tricks imitating the juggler who was performing with bowls of water. One mother combed an infant's hair for lesser carnivora. From time to time an acrobatic performer shouted at the groups and they returned the call with a trained, languid chorus. But for the thousand eager faces that watched it would have been like the rehearsal of a troupe informally marshaling their forces.

Presently two young girls with bound feet pressed into scarlet satin slippers mounted lumbering ponies. They grasped rings fastened to the saddles and, with a leap, projected themselves upwards, feet straight into the air. When enough coppers had been collected from the audience, who in addition to the entrance fee were expected to contribute after each feat, the girls

achieved the supreme effort. Mounting to the horse's back, each balanced herself there. Swaying precariously on minute, misshapen feet, they exhibited the rarest and most difficult of equestrian acts.

Riding homeward we went with a weary crowd, contentedly meandering back to the city. They had made oblations and for another year had confident hopes of heaven. When the mortal flesh was no longer able to feel the acute sorrows and joys of life, they would pass to that passionless existence, after supping on mythical peaches.

One we encountered who had need of immediate salvation. A group of ragged children scattered along the street. In their midst walked a criminal. His wrists were knotted with cords. Around his neck was suspended a placard recounting his misdeeds. Escorted by a cordon of soldiers he was paraded through the streets from his prison so that he should lose "face" and bear the ignominy of abuse from those who saw him.

His steps lagged. His eyes were glassy, unseeing; though his gaze was on the earth, he stumbled.

Behind him walked a soldier with ax-like cleaver bared for the execution.

The blazing pyre of offerings had ascended in per-

fumed smoke to the Princess of the Colored Clouds. Frantically the mob had demanded the boon of immortality. Yet through the soft, misty dusk of a spring evening when life was sweet, they stolidly watched this man, dragging his way to death. . . .

CHAPTER XXV

TOLERANCE

A SMALL, shriveled man huddled closer in the folds of his wine red toga as the sharp April wind tore across the platform. Often he sniffled. His eyes, behind gold-rimmed spectacles, moved with mild interest over the throng of spectators who had assembled—ostensibly to pay him honor. It was with mutually eager curiosity the crowd and the Lama regarded each other.

A hundred years had passed since the last Panshan Lama had come to Peking. Traveling as he had from the Tashi-lumpo monastery in the fastness of Thibet, the advent of this man was an occasion of tremendous importance. Countless adherents of his faith had journeyed from far Mongolia, offering their homage —and several million dollars' worth of tangible gifts. Holiest of all men in the eyes of his spiritual subjects, he was held in even greater reverence than the Dalai Lama, the secular head of the Thibetan Church. He was the "Living Buddha," the incarnation of Amitabha, held in abject veneration.

Because of the strife between two factions in Thibet the Panshan Lama had recently been forced to flee. Traditionally Thibet was under the rule of China. But the British, knowing its value as a buffer state along the borders of India had wished for a century and a half to have it under their suzerainty. In the present internecine strife the Dalai Lama is pro-British and in control of a newly formed army. The Panshan Lama is pro-Chinese. With him range the vast force of monks that inhabit the fortress cloisters and there exact tribute from a superstitious people. His influence has remained spiritually dominant. The king-priest had now come to Peking to save his life and incidentally to rally new forces around him.

The Ocean Terrace, a group of marvelous pavilions in the Forbidden City, with roofs of ocher, lapis and turquoise rising above the wind-tossed waters of the lake were given him as a residence. Six hundred dollars a day were accorded by the Chinese Government for his maintenance—though he subsisted simply on vegetables and brick tea with a lump of butter floating therein. Jealously guarded by his retinue, venturing out only in his yellow motor car with soldiers lining the street to protect his passage, he lived like a recluse and a godling.

The Terrace of Dragons and Phoenix.

That we were permitted to behold him was due to a curious idea engendered in a missionary brain. Officially our cards of invitation (issued with discriminating care) read that we were to be present at an "audience." Striving for the brotherhood of man and wishing to display a supreme example of tolerance, a religious group had arranged to pay respect to this highest representative of another cult. The occasion, which they designated as unique, was indeed odd enough to bring great numbers.

On the platform in long robes of a Doctor of Divinity presided the chairman of the Society of All Religions. With him, in remarkable juxtaposition, were grouped the patriarchal figure of a prelate of the Orthodox Church, a turbaned Hindu, an ancient Confucianist, a Taoist abbot, two Buddhist head priests from the Hsien Liane Sze, a minister of Protestant Christianity—all assembled "to show honor and pay obeisance" to the spiritual head of Lamaism.

Below the platform the audience was grouped—tourists who audibly stated their conviction that a theatrical performance was in process; ubiquitous Chinese with clicking kodaks; Peking residents who came from a desire to see the Lama and who regis-

tered more and more indignation at this latest missionary vagary as the proceedings advanced.

Relegated to the outer court were those who professed the Lama faith—broad-cheeked Mongol women with heavy loops of silver, coral and turquoise studded, falling from their temples to their breasts. Each dragged at the twisted girdle of her lord, in some perturbation amid the shifting crowd. Stolid Mongol men, chieftains of their villages, looked with awe at the spectacle of the sleek Chinese and the strange white race unaccountably gathered to worship the incarnation of their god.

Long screeds were unfolded—the wind whipping at the papers as if to tear them from the reader's hands. Versions of the English text were repeated in Thibetan, Mongolian and Chinese.

Thus on Easter Sunday—instead of proclaiming the Resurrection, that supreme message of the Christian faith—one of the ministers who was presumed to uphold this faith, spoke of Christ and Mohammed and Gautama, the Buddha, placing them in the same category. Instead of obeying the instructions of the Lord—"Go ye into all the world, spreading the Word" —he spoke of tolerance, tolerance—and asked for a message from the Panshan Lama.

The Living Buddha sat on his throne of golden brocade, impassive, hands on knees, in the attitude of one dreaming of salvation as had the Lord Buddha underneath the Sacred Bo tree. A meek, unobtrusive man, his lips moved in constant prayer and benediction.

Then in whispered, clipped sentences, he replied. His words came to us speedily through an interpreter. Tolerance? A clearer understanding of a common aim? The desire to respect faith in whatsoever manner it is to be expressed? No, these things did not enter his mind. How could he comprehend the fellowship of all religions?

The Panshan Lama crisply expatiated on Mahayana, the vehicle of salvation—and told of the eight Buddhist hells to which are condemned those who have committed the three vices of the body, the four of the tongue or the three of the mind.

He exhorted us to remember that all honor and wealth in this world is preordained by the virtues of a previous existence. In like manner our sufferings here are but the expiation of former sins. By abstaining from eating flesh and consuming vegetables, he assured us we would prolong our lives, enjoy good health—and at last attain the Buddhahood.

"I urge you to read our sacred book," he further exhorted those eight hundred Occidentals present. "If there is anything you do not understand, a teacher will be given you to explain. All who believe our faith, must continue to believe. Those who have not joined, I hope will do so without delay."

He extended his hands to bless the joss sticks, tied with orange ribbon, that gift he made to all those who had come to pay him honor. The chorus of Buddhist monks, loud and full, swelled in a rhythm, cadenced as the waves of the sea.

CHAPTER XXVI

APRIL IDYL

EARLY in the morning we traveled along the willow road. The shimmering dawn light touched the way with fresh radiance. Transcendentally beautiful were the city gates through which we passed. A group of Mongols swarming from a caravansary in robes of purple, ocher and glinting serpent green, impeded our passage for a chaotic moment. Leading their camels, the men of the caravan were starting their monotonous journey back to the steppes. Our rickshaws, struggling through the crowd, took us on to the Summer Palace, known as Yi Ho Yuan, "the place which gives rest and peace to Heaven-sent old age."

Our way a score of years previous, had been traversed by courtiers hastening to the palace of their Empress. In sedan chairs of scarlet or green, according to the rank of the personage carried, in Peking hooded carts drawn by sleek, strong mules, they had filed. Just such a day in April they had risen before the first light so that they might reach the Summer

Palace and there welcome their sovereign who at this season left the Forbidden City for the greater delights of her Arcadian abode.

This country through which we passed was the flat plain of North China. Endless willows fringed the twisting road, planted at regular intervals. The earth was lightly covered with a haze of young, green millet. Brown cones of grave mounds dotting the fields interrupted the fertility by their harsh contours. Marble slabs of more pretentious tombs were raised on gigantic turtle backs. Often skirting these burial places a man and a mule harnessed together dragged the primitive wooden plowshare, marking a crooked furrow.

Mud houses lined the way, the crumbling compound walls falling again into the soil from which they had been raised. A young girl ground grain into flour by a revolving mill stone. An old man waded in a sluggish stream to gather water chestnuts. A flock of geese, long necks magenta tinted, waddled to a pond. At a village donkey-station men loaded heavy burdens on these small beasts and started forward with jingling bells. Dimly across the fields rose the pagoda of the five pinnacles. By the roadside men were roofing the temple of the Rain God with new tiles so that he might appreciate their solicitude and be less pro-

fuse with his showers in the coming season. . . . Such was this bit of country, typical of all China, stretching to the low horizon.

Then in the distance, like a point of fire, glittered a mount of vivid yellow roofs. Against the barren range of Western Hills reared this first elevation, a hillock magically transmuted into a mountain of gold. Incredibly miraculous, it seemed. Yet unlike a mirage, it did not fade. Every moment of approach made the marvel more tangibly exquisite.

The entrance gates are guarded now only by two soldiers of the Republic. They called no challenge. We passed beyond the bronze lions into the domain that the Empress Tzu Hsi had conjured. Here she had expended revenues that had been expressly collected for the organization and maintenance of a navy. Building close to the ruins of the ancient palace destroyed in 1860 by the Allies as a reprisal for the murder of two envoys, she created a pleasure house of wondrous beauty.

Blue were the sparkling waters of a lake; a dazzling blue was the broad sweep of heaven. As if suspended between the sky and waters were arranged a succession of precipitous terraces. Tier upon tier glinted curving roofs of golden tile, from the great *p'ai lou* at

the lakeside to the zenith, the Temple of Ten Thousand Buddhas. On either side were grouped rounded pavilions of turquoise and aquamarine, misted by the blossoms of the steep gardens. This was the vista that blazed before us—and we halted.

A balustrade of carven stone edges the lake. Curving along the outline of the shore wooded with trees of arbor vitæ, stretches a covered gallery. It is painted in a hundred hues as if with "powder of malachite and lapis lazuli, recording the dreams of a thousand years." The crossbeams have a motif of billowing clouds framing miniature landscapes. Each slender pillar is enlivened by a design of surpassing cleverness. Interminably long, bewilderingly beautiful, the passageway leads past palace halls where the princes lived, past silken petaled magnolia trees, to the great central court.

In this space the sun rays seem concentrated on the magnificence. The three-arched *p'ai lou* by the water is cunningly wrought to hold each gleam of light.

Through this *p'ai lou* the mandarins must have wended their way in rainbow robes like a processional of portly butterflies. According to their station they passed—those of the first class in purple robes embroidered with the mythical bird called *Fung,* with the

Weirdly Constructed Bridges over Lakeside Paths.

ruby button surmounting the cap and a girdle of four agates and rubies. Then came those emblazoned with the cock, and wearing the coral button—those of the peacock and sapphires. Up the marble steps they strutted munching the cloves that are called "nail incense" to perfume the breath before speaking in the presence of the sovereign, filing along the terrace of dragons and phoenix, to the Audience Hall. There on a dais, behind the Yellow Curtain, was enthroned the woman who ordered their lives and ruled their world.

The great rooms are sealed now. The palaces are enfolded in the peace of empty days.

Above us loomed impressive walls of stupendous, Babylonian complexity. Ever we mounted to steeper heights. Through a painted passage we came to a pavilion of bronze, built in the days of Ch'ien Lung and enduring through the flames of war that swept away more fragile structures. Again we climbed through tunnels of hewn rock, progressing by tremendous leaps. From the last subterranean steps we emerged onto a spacious terrace, the Pavilion of the Spreading Cloud.

Still higher above us towered the facade of a temple in tiles of green and gold, glinting like a casket

of precious faïence. Niched in the surface were small statues of Buddha—thousands of them, multiplied, row upon row. From these the temple took its name. Jutting into the sky, crowned by curious pinnacles of Dagoba shape, it seemed eternally beyond our reach, like a vision of a fantastic paradise we could not hope to attain.

We moved close to the edge of the terrace and from the balcony looked down on the wide expanse of shining water, the suave roofs reflecting the light rays in joyous color. Grouped before us was the bit of world the old Empress loved best of all her vast possessions. . . . Walks by lake paths, over weirdly constructed bridges; gardens where she tasted the first fruits that were hers by sovereign right; the small island with the Taoist shrine built over a cave where the King of Dragons lived. A hawk swept through the sky, his circling flight reaching no higher level than our lofty elevation. . . .

Late in the afternoon, we took a barge upon the waters. Oared by four old men, pushing forward with the weight of their bodies, directed by a piratical *laodah* who managed a pole in a lordly manner, we drifted idly along the lake's edge. The green of the willows was merged with blossoms of a thousand trees

—a faint cloud, white and dimly rose. Beyond reared the gaunt contours of the Western Hills, enfolded by an amethystine haze. On the spur of a mount, lifting its slender height to pierce the sky, stood the Jade Fountain Pagoda. Through the lotus stalks we glided to the arched dream of marble that is named the Bridge of the Jade Girdle. There came to us a drowsy hum of bees, honey gathering in the twilight hours.

We knew how Tzu Hsi must have worshiped the perfection of this pastoral magnificence—how she clung to her life here in the wonder palace she had created. For existence was so boundlessly beautiful that no mortal would willingly ever leave this domain —even for the fabled paradise of Amitabha.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE VALLEY OF EMPERORS

Across the desert spaces jutted imperious, towering mountains, the northern barrier of China, a protecting range that enclosed her fields and villages. At Nankou by the boundary line the flat, fertile plain had become an arid waste. The land was strewn with boulders that torrents had hurled from the mountainside and was deeply cut by the erosion of many waters. At intervals rose dunes of sand banked there by the strong, dust-laden winds of the desert. It was a desolate terrain, like the leprous surface of a scorched world.

A path worn by many feet crossed wide river beds dried to powder, mounting precipitous banks. Past crude hamlets it twisted, by walls of mud and rock, where crawled naked, earth-colored children, spawn of the harsh bare land.

We made the journey in sedan chairs of wicker, hoisted on poles that were shouldered by four bearers. To the steady trot of feet these chairs jogged in un-

comfortable unison. At a signal the men shifted the pole from shoulder to shoulder with a vicious upheaval of the passenger. There were sixty jolts in the span of a minute. The way was long—twenty-two miles of excruciating bumps. Behind our chairs trailed a stout Chinese guide, his bulk increased to superhuman proportions by a tremendous quantity of padded coats. Astride a donkey, he obliterated the small beast completely and seemed to move by some mechanical contrivance not in the best working order. The donkey driver followed, riding another of his animals. Thus a cavalcade of ten escorted us across the waste.

It was this remote boundary of their Empire that the rulers of the great Ming dynasty chose for their eternal resting place. When the reign in the Forbidden City was over and the soul passed for judgment to the Yellow Springs, the Emperor's mortal remains were interred with great pomp in these hill tombs. Yung Loh, third of this mighty house who had moved his court from Nanking to Peking, the northern capital, first selected the site near Nankou. Twelve successors of the dynasty lay buried in the hills about him.

In the midst of the desert we came upon a glorious *p'ai lou* of marble. Five arches of carved stone were

reared against a sky of glistening cobalt. Beyond, widened an amphitheater of jagged peaks, the solid, stupendous mass curving in a perfect half circle.

Straight through the *p'ai lou* to the center of the mountains, led the royal road. Now it is but an earthen track with here and there a slab to mark the way for the granite has long since been carried off by predatory peasants. So we followed a broken trail of rubble, deeply cut into the soft soil by generations of feet that had trod the venerated path. The "Spirit's Road to the Mausolea," it is called. Immeasurably far to the eye, in the distance of the great spaces, rose a softly tinted arch of stucco, the Red Gate. Here in the old days all dismounted to show their respect and went on foot the remainder of the journey to the tombs. Still farther along is another arch. The way seemed endless. . . .

Then gradually from the dun-colored land emerged the double row of guardian animals that watch the tombs. For nearly a mile they are aligned, spaced at intervals. Hewn from a solid block, these great stone creatures are twice life size. Four lions are there, two standing guard by day and two by night. Then appear four monumental camels, four elephants, rams, unicorns, horses. . . . A file of live donkeys

trotting down the avenue seemed ludicrously small—like ants, carrying burdens larger than their bodies—beside these great monsters. Finally two gigantic generals stand solemnly on guard, two priests and two astrologers—all to watch over the long sleep of Yung Loh, the Son of Heaven.

This sovereign had bestowed great beauty on the world. He created the golden magnificence of the Forbidden City, the celestial purity of the Temple of Heaven. By building the present walls about Peking he gave protection to a harried people. So he deserves the secure and exquisite resting place he caused to be fashioned for his mortal clay.

Still at a great distance beyond the guardian figures jutted the stupendous mountains. At the base they were dimmed by a ragged haze, but many pointed peaks were clearly etched against the sky like the incredible, mythically beautiful mountains of a Chinese painting. The lower slopes were powdered with the soft bloom of myriad fruit trees although it seemed strange that the harsh, dry earth could yield such profusion of blossom. Dotted at the base of the mountain ridges were groves of dark, shelving pines. Above the mass spread the rose and ocher roofs of the ancient temple tombs, each Emperor in the place de-

creed by his horoscope. In the center, greatest of all, gleamed the mellow golden tiles of Yung Loh's temple.

A final pull up the last steep eminence brought us to a great portico. Still beyond that lay a second great gate. The eaves were crowned with wild wheat, the painted beams were faded by the harsh sun of centuries. It was in 1424 that Yung Loh was laid to rest.

In the grove of pines that symbolize eternal life is a stone altar table, with incense holder, vases and candlesticks equally fashioned of granite. Three flights of marble steps lead up to the hall, large as the nave of a great cathedral. Gigantic columns of aromatic wood support the lofty ceiling. The immense shrine is bare—save for the altar on which stands the small, lacquered spirit tablet of Yung Loh.

Forty yards into the mountain a passage has been excavated. Still farther in the heart of the earth, securely sealed, is the chamber of the sarcophagus.

This crypt was paved, so Chinese historians have written, with closely fitting blocks of stone so that no drop of moisture might enter. These ancient archives record that the splendor of the site, the beauty of the templed grove are not to be compared with the dazzling magnificence concentrated in this inner room, called the "City of Precious Relics." On a jeweled couch

lies the coffin of Yung Loh, of rare catalpa wood, lacquered in gold.

All of beauty and riches that he could take with him was here amassed. A myth lingers that human sacrifices were interred with this ruler, although figures of clay were supposed to be substituted for the men who had formerly offered their lives, to accompany their lord to the nether world. For Yung Loh a man-child—tricked with promise of reward in a future incarnation, and given quicksilver to swallow so that his eyes might remain staring wide open—was immured, standing upright to offer the Emperor a pipe on a golden salver. Opposite, was placed a young girl to serve tea, since so great a personage must not go unattended to the Land of Shadows.

Bullocks were sacrificed in great numbers. Fruits and grains were offered. Libations of wine were poured to the ground. In a great stone vessel were placed candles of walrus fat, the "Everlasting Lamps."

Then a huge stone was slipped into a groove, buttressing the door with irrevocable immobility. The entrance to the tumulus was sealed. Yung Loh was at peace forever.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GREAT WALL

"FEAR not the cock from the South, but the wolf from the North—" warns the ancient proverb. Thus the Chinese have ever guarded the mountainous barriers of their country with assiduous care.

From the south have risen hydra-headed rebellions. In our day came a menace of Sovietism from Canton. Yet Dr. Sun Yat-sen died just at the moment when he might have influenced the unstable government and plunged the country into chaos. In Peking they laid his body in an erstwhile imperial palace hall, piled high his bier with paper flowers. At the moment that the leader was vanquished by death, the party split into warring factions, impotent and unheeded. The Kuo Ming Tang that only two months before loomed so dangerously in the political field, now sank to comparative obscurity.

But from the north there has always been the lurking menace of the Mongol and the Tartar. They were barbarians, lusting for the spoils of China. Half

nomadic tribes, they looked upon the fertile plains of Chihli, the fruits of the quiet, industrious people who inhabited all of the eighteen provinces—and coveted these plethoric fields. Again and again, through the centuries, they broke all barriers and imposed their rule on a peaceful race.

To deter these invasions the Chinese constructed a wall. . . . Scientists surmise that it is the one work of man which can be viewed from Mars. That statement alone gives an impression of its unique immensity. For two thousand miles this barricade stretches, from Shanhaikwan at the sea, far into the hinterland of Thibet. As the Chinese count, the way is longer. For they measure the serpentine route up mountains and down valleys, three thousand seven hundred miles.

We wound along the precipitous way through Nankou Pass. Gigantic, scarred mountains towered above us, stupendous piles that seemed heavily tottering over the villages that were but sparse clusters of stone huts. Terraced gardens, from which the inhabitants wrested their sustenance were precariously carved from the mountain side.

At Ch'ing Lung Ch'iao, the Bright Dragon Bridge, we left the train and thus traded our compartment for

Like a Mighty Ribbon the Wall Girdled the Mountains.

the slippery backs of small, sturdy burros. Still following the course of the stream through this canyon-like enclosure, we progressed slowly, the donkeys picking their way over the loose stones, fording an occasional trickle of water, clambering up steep banks with an energetic motion.

Above us, far against the sky of indigo was pricked the crenellated fringe of a wall. Earth colored as the mighty mountains, it cut across the summits clearly, rising in an undulating line, scaling pointed peaks. Higher we climbed, and still higher. The towering barrier momentarily grew more enormous. Like a mighty ribbon it girdled all the mountains spread before us in vast panorama.

At the very foot of the Wall we left the mouse-gray donkeys. Climbing now by our own efforts we went through a gateway and then up the steps that led to the broad summit of the fortification. Some twenty feet above the ground the solid masonry rises. As wide as it is high, the strength was sufficient to resist any attack by ancient battering rams. Then we mounted the *terre-plein,* past two watchtowers, up to the top of a pointed crag. Before us, far into the distance writhed the sinuous outlines of the Wall. It seemed the vertebra of a great coiled, quiescent dragon

—and if the structure were cut, then would ooze away the lifeblood of China.

To view these successive ranges, all topped by this fortification, to count the mighty watchtowers which at this strategic point are placed every hundred yards, is to realize the compelling necessity that caused the Chinese to expend time and labor in this protective effort. Seeing the great expanse, multiplying that glimpse by the length of two thousand miles, it is incredible that this should be the work of man. It is as immutable as the very hills. Only a phenomenon of nature could be so stupendous. In the beginning seven hundred thousand criminals and prisoners of war were commandeered for the task. Now the few guards stationed along the way seem pigmies—and we wonder how their earlier prototypes could ever have dragged the brick and mortar to these perilous positions.

But the menace of the constant foe was a powerful incentive. The precautions of the peasants who planted willow hedges to impede the advance of cavalry and plowed their fields from east to west so that the ridged furrows would prove difficult for carts to negotiate, were not enough. Even before the beginning of our Christian era the raids from the north

were so devastating that the Chinese began the herculean labor of this protective measure.

The Wall was long in the building. Sometimes the barbarian hordes edged around the uncompleted ends. In the tenth century the Tartars captured Peking and there established their dynasty for two hundred and fifty years. Then came the great Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century, sweeping together the restless bands of Mongolia to descend upon Peking. It was here in the Pass at Nankou that he first attacked. The heavily fortified village of Chu Yung Kuan resisted valiantly and turned back the advancing foe. But the men of the Khan chose another section where the guards were less vigilant. Before the Chinese could light their great beacons and summon aid, Genghis Khan slipped through to the plains of Chihli—and captured the capital.

The last of the Tartar invaders, though they had harried the ramparts by raids for many years, came at last to Peking by guile. These Manchus held the country for many oppressive years—but now at last even they had been engulfed by the waves of China's population.

At first the conquerors imposed heroic measures to insure obedience. But gradually they lost much of

their individuality and adopted the customs of the country they had won. The hard riding hunters became dignified officials swathed in silken robes, enmeshed in the filaments of the curious new diplomacy they had learned. Their language imperceptibly fell into disuse. Though the higher classes still retain marks of distinction those of the lower banner corps insist—"Manchu, Chinese, now time, he allee samee."

So it has ever happened. The original strength of the primitive conquerors has been sapped by contact with the Chinese. Unwarlike, docile, the sons of Han submitted to the invader. Yet the waves of their civilization insidiously submerged these victors, until the savages died of inanition, lost identity and became amalgamated with the Chinese who in the end proved by sheer weight of numbers to be the dominant race.

The Chinese prefer their battles staged in the theater. Gigantic generals, indicated by three flags sticking up behind their heads, prance about performing doughty deeds in ballet formation. They are a people who stop cannonading for a cup of tea and take umbrellas to war as a part of their equipment.

The long-bearded old men, who constantly move the right hand over a pair of walnuts to keep the fingers supple for the writing of characters; the kindly

philosophers who reduce life to the rigidity of a moral precept, and then having found a formula to utter, practice an existence of primrose ease—they are unconquerable, timeless, unchangeable. . . . They are China.

CHAPTER XXIX

KALGAN—AND THE "NUMBER ONE MISSIONARY"

Soldiers tramped down the road, singing as they passed. Soldiers, another company of gray-coated youths with pipes, drums and trumpets came swinging along in the opposite direction, enveloped in clouds of yellow dust. Every temple gate, with blue and green painted watchdogs, was occupied by the military. Every open space was a parade ground where men tossed javelins into the air, played at basket ball or engaged in bayonet drill. Rickshaws and peddlers scattered as mounted officers came clattering down the road, urging their griffin ponies to a quick, incisive trot, striking the flanks with riding crops fringed with horse's tails.

Kalgan was occupied by Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang.

Seven days from Peking on the caravan route, from six to thirteen hours by the erratic train, exists this ancient city on the trail to Mongolia. A clearer understanding comes of Peking, its barbarous grandeur, its crude, colorful life, with the realization of all that has

poured down this narrow Pass and spread over Chihli to concentrate in the capital. As conquerors or as tribute subjects, the savage hordes have prodigally dissipated their wealth in the myriad villages of the lowlands.

A circle of marvelous peaks mount from the sandy plain. Kalgan, 4,000 feet above the sea, lies girdled between these mountains and a thin, winding river.

One long street follows the natural contour of the site. The roadway is raised three to four yards above the shop entrances by the silt left from last summer's flood. It is deeply rutted by the continual passage of carts and gun caissons. Along the narrow passageway multitudinous banners hang. Old gates lead through ancient, crenellated walls. Balconied houses of painted wood lean in tired dilapidation against the stone walls of newer edifices. Goatskins are stretched to dry in the sun. Tall flagons of hammered brass glisten in the shop fronts. For the name of this city tells of its purpose. Kalgan is a corrupted form of the Mongol *halha,* a mart.

Elevated high above the roadway are temples, the roofs tilted in sharp, exotic curves. Two dragons, excitedly steadying themselves on their wriggling tails, adorn the central ridge. Half under the shadow

High Above the Roadway Stand Temples.

of the mountain precipice these shrines are built. Copper-colored gods are on the altars to receive the homage of copper-skinned traders who come down the Pass.

On we rode, exploring the city. Past great heaps of furs that lie guarded in the streets because there are not sufficient godowns to store the pelts. Past queer, old stores telling of their merchandise by gigantic stone boots or streamers of varicolored, knotted cloth. Open booths held treasures of the distant spaces together with the commodities of civilization for which they could be bartered.

The long road continued for many *li,* then it swerved steeply down. The ever-hurrying rickshaws catapulted us into a narrow plain, a river gorge banded by a flat ridge of sand. The mountains were cleft—far, far up the winding way led through the rift by jagged peaks, purple red in the sunset.

"Beyond, in the heart of Asia—" thus run the phrases of Ossendowski— "lies the enormous, mysterious rich country of Mongolia. . . . The cradle of peoples, histories, legends; the native land of bloody conquerors who have left here their capitals covered by the sands of the Gobi, their mysterious rings and their ancient, nomadic laws; the states of

monks and evil devils, the country of wandering tribes administered by the descendents of Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan. . . . That is Mongolia.

"Country of many cults; the land of curious doctors, prophets, sorcerers, fortune tellers and witches, the land of the sign of the swastica; the land which has not forgotten the thoughts of the long deceased great potentates of Asia and of half of Europe. That is Mongolia.

"The land of nude mountains, of plains burned by the sun and killed by the cold, of ill cattle and ill people; the nest of pests, anthrax and smallpox; the land of boiling hot springs and of mountain passes inhabited by demons; of sacred lakes swarming with fish; of wolves, rare species of deer and mountain goats, marmots in millions, wild horses, wild donkeys and wild camels that have never known bridles, ferocious dogs and rapacious birds of prey which devour the dead bodies cast out on the plains by the people. That is Mongolia."

For a long time that evening we watched the vaulting trail that led through the mountains. Past us went a motor car, lumbering hub deep in the soft sand. At the wheel sat an adventurous, mystic-eyed Russian steering a perilous course. The small ton-

neau was crowded with luggage, built out, roped on, in such an accumulation that the touring car took the proportions of a huge truck. Perched high on the monstrous bales and bundles were nondescript passengers, booked for Urga.

Coming down the Pass eight bearers brought a heavy coffin, the red lacquer poles niching cruelly into their shoulders. A man had died beyond the boundary of his country. Because no Chinese can rest peacefully in the alien land behind the passes, they were bringing his body back to be interred in native soil. So that his soul might follow, a cock in a wicker basket was tied to the top of the coffin—crowing, crowing that the stumbling shade might find the way.

Then lurching camels swung down the trail. Crimson and saffron robed Mongols followed in great numbers. With their cargoes of grain from the hinterland and odd products of the desert came cartridges from Russia, rifles, guns and saw-toothed bayonets.

For Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang is the keeper of the Pass. His soldiers edge the camel trains from the roadway, singing as they go into the twilight that has dimmed the earth to myrtle color. They collect tribute from every load of merchandise that comes into China by this route. They examine all the freight

cars that bring goods from Peking and the ports to travel overland. Every chicken, every ounce of tobacco, every grain of opium that is sold in Kalgan is taxed by his agents. For Marshal Feng has ensconced himself in an impregnable position and is busy collecting the sinews of war.

The next morning we were received by Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang.

He is one of the two great figures in China, this man who has assumed the dictatorship of the northwestern frontier. Only one person—Chang Tso-lin of Manchuria—stands in the path of his ambitions. It is to counteract the furious outpouring of Chang's munition factories in Mukden that Feng buys Russian arms. To meet Chang's increasing forces Feng is recruiting and drilling with feverish activity. They will clash one day. The War Lord of Mukden seems the stronger. Yet the outcome of their struggle is uncertain because all things are uncertain in China.

Last autumn, when Feng Yu-hsiang by a strategic march captured Peking one night and ruled the capital, he expelled the Imperial Family from the Forbidden City—to make place for his own aspirations, it is thought. Chang Tso-lin effectually curbed those hopes. Though Feng's men were given substantial

places in the governing body, he himself dared not retain Peking against the friendly but implacable mandates of Chang. He resigned some sixteen times a position he had never possessed and threatening to commit suicide unless he was permitted to seek the modest retirement he craved, Feng chose this territory as a strategic point and made himself master of these waste spaces.

Out on the plain beyond Kalgan he is encamped. The everlasting hills encircle him on three sides. From the ancient Chinese city across the river new roads, deep, sandy gullies, lead to his barracks. Through insufferable clouds of yellow dust, over excruciating bumps, we rickshawed to these quarters. A new house of mud bricks was guarded by soldiers who held executioners' swords in ornate leather scabbards.

The secretary and interpreter who had been 'phoning about the meeting at short intervals the entire previous day now met us at the gate. All the affability of a southern Chinese was at his command. He showed us into a narrow room. The white walls were bare. White coolie cloth stretched across the windows; a long table where Marshal Feng conferred with his staff was covered with the same flimsy material.

Marshal Feng kept the severely early hours of a military man. He had asked us to come at seven-thirty in the morning.

It is said that the Marshal does not sleep at night, fearing assassination. Through the long hours of darkness the house is kept ablaze with lights. He moves from room to room so that no attack may trap him. Then, towards dawn, he permits himself a fitful repose. . . .

But now, but a moment after our arrival, Marshal Feng entered the room. A huge man—tall and stout. His head was egg-shaped, with closely shaven, bristly hair. His suit of plain blue cloth was without insignia of rank, copied from the models of Russian Communist leaders. Extending a plump, rigid hand to greet us, foreign fashion, he tittered nervously. He motioned for us to be seated and took his place at the head of the table. Tea was brought and he immediately took a hospitable sip. After that he did not touch the cup, for such an action would have signaled his wish for our departure.

Facing Marshal Feng was a large, oval mirror. He maneuvered in front of this for a moment, peering into it, adjusting it so that he might see the better. He gave an impression of extreme vanity, this large

man as he preened himself, craning his neck, unctuously rubbing his hands. But no! In an instant his purpose became apparent. The glass was a necessary precaution that he might see any one stealthily approaching behind him. The glaring whiteness of the bare room—we understood now, he had no wish for lurking shadows!

We talked. At first a ponderous interchange of compliments and good wishes passed by the medium of the interpreter. The Marshal seemed inordinately pleased at our banality, averring that he was the "man of the hour." Obligingly he posed, looking most amiably into the kodak that I leveled. But we did not stage an interview according to the expected standard. We had no facts to glean. Our interest in the Marshal was merely in the individual.

Feng, who had preened himself into a statue of a man, relaxed gradually into a personage of human attributes. He laughed; he chortled; his fat, bulging cheeks shook with mirth. Men came with messages that apparently demanded his attention, but Feng waved them aside. Obviously he was enjoying our palpable interest and the not too subtle flattery we offered.

For it was not to our polite queries in regard to

reconstruction work that he warmed. There was no enthusiasm in his platitudinous remarks about beating swords into plowshares, the necessity of teaching every man an honest trade and dispersing the soldiers to become useful citizens.

On the contrary, it was the praise of his battalions that delighted the Marshal. His eyes gleamed when we said his men were the best trained in China. As we spoke of the forces spreading over the country, multitudinous as an army of ants, he nodded and rubbed his hands, chuckling with satisfaction. Bugles called from over the plain. Men went marching into the sunrise, singing.

Then as a signal favor of his good will, Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang presented us with his photograph. He autographed it with careful, ostentatious brush strokes to show that although a military man, he had more than the rudiments of the scholar. . . . Beside his name, Marshal Feng inscribed his titles. He who had baptized his men with a hose before entering Peking, insisted upon keeping the farcical old legend of his faith. With a flourish he added the superscription—"Chief of the Missionaries."

Ironically a flare of trumpets sounded.

Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang Chuckled.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PAOMACHANG RACES

THE Englishman, just out from home, regarded the races with an air of supercilious tolerance. Unfortunately, a compatriot asked him how he enjoyed the spectacle. "Very fine! Ah, yes!" he ejaculated, "it's just like seeing a couple of white mice running around a soup tureen!"

Not so does the old inhabitant of Peking think of the trial of speed. He looks upon the races as the pivotal event of the spring season. All his conversation tends that way for many weeks. He stops betting on the probability of war in a fortnight and places amicable wagers on the horses of his friends. For it is an affair of communal interest. If one does not possess ponies, at least one knows many owners and palpitates with them all through the training season. Not only at the Club and over the tea tables does the interest grow. Even the Cockney shop clerks unbend for a moment as they hand you a parcel and venture positive opinions about some particular horse.

If one motors out to the Paomachang Club House early enough on the glorious May Sunday that marks the climax of the races, it is easy enough to believe this is a special exhibit staged exclusively for a small group of interested spectators. In front of the Club a few persons indolently gather, lolling in wicker chairs. Owners saunter by, wearing the rosetted colors of their stables. Opposite, under a newly erected mat shed, the marine band plays, and intersperses the arduous task of interpreting Sousa by long pauses in which they receive the ministrations of the bar boy.

Four curveting horses are led out. Some twenty have been listed in the official book for the event, but only these survivors compete for the Hun Ho Cup. But what would you! A horse cannot appear in every trial and the limited number of entries must be spread out to cover all the eleven events of the day.

Gay are the colors of the gentlemen jockeys who wave a jaunty greeting. Green and gold, scarlet and rose, they prance along. There is a dexterous maneuvering for place, for these men who ride their own mounts or the horses of friends have acquired much of the professional manner. They are heavier, however, making an average of a hundred and fifty

pounds. They live too well to train the year through. The Mongol ponies that have been bred and trained for racing are smaller than the homeside mounts, standing about thirteen hands and one or two inches.

Off they go! The spectators stroll to the rail to watch the streaking colors flash around the course. Field glasses are leveled. Muted exclamations arise. "He's holding his place!" "A length ahead!" "Now see him come!"

Down the last stretch they ride in a final burst of speed. Vigorously the jockeys flap their boots against the flanks. . . . On, on— Then with a dash one cap of vivid hue flies past the winning post.

The owner of the pony at this point always stirred from his lethargy and hurried to the gate. Catching the bridle with proper pride, he led his horse to the paddock. Following him went an admiring group of acquaintances, cheering the horse and rider.

The spectators dispersed, dividing into two throngs. Everyone placed wagers. There were no bookmakers. So it was merely a matter of temperament whether one went to the pari-mutuel or lined up for the cash sweeps. Indeed most persons tried both chances.

By the wisteria arbor was a long row of booths: the pari-mutuel. Over each was placed the name of a

horse. One deposited three Mexican dollars at the sign of the pony he had chosen and received a ticket, registering his bet. When the race was finished fifteen per cent was deducted for the benefit of the Club and the odds were made, mathematically dependent on the number of persons who had had the good taste to choose the lucky horse. Thus if one had taken a griffin little likely to be the victor, one rejoiced perhaps in the sum of sixteen dollars as against the three he had staked. On the other hand—and this is the tragedy of the pari-mutuel—if one chose a horse that all Peking had had the perspicacity to pick as a winner, one received some paltry amount not equaling the three dollars risked. There is no betting for "place" or "show," and he who sees his favorite come in a nose behind has no reward in this scheme of things.

Old Chinese women tottered to the window on bound feet to collect their winnings. Gray, sparse hair drawn tightly back over a sunburned scalp, a cigarette in an amber holder tilted outrageously from the corner of the mouth, they seemed unlikely persons to meet at a race track. Chinese youths swished their silken skirts in the rush to amass the clinking silver dollars doled over the counters. All the Cockney clerks from the haberdashers' shops, soldiers in the

uniforms of the Allies, turbaned Hindu silk merchants, German butchers, Russian refugees, Moslems, Mongols and Jews—the vast crowd that by midday had congregated in the outer spaces of the Club, all milled to secure their bets for the next race.

Then the throng to a man swung over to the cash sweepstakes. Here, for two dollars Mex one received a paper slip with a printed number. As one paid, a round lozenge with the number indicated was dropped into a huge brass ball. At the end of each event this receptacle was revolved with a great rattling of counters. Out dropped a single lozenge—— The number was posted. Very slowly the Chinese wrote with crayon on the board. His faultless figures were so long in the making that one had moments of hope. Number 520 was what we held. A 5 was followed by a 2. Perfect! Tenaciously we clutched the precious paper. A round 0 was formed. We gasped ecstatically. . . . Then the Chinese, as an afterthought, added a downward stroke, making 529. The paper, crushed into a ball, slipped from our nerveless fingers. We watched a plump, padded Celestial gather in the thousand dollars.

A distinctly British luncheon, consisting of a vast series of meat courses was served in the upper rooms

of the Clubhouse. After the repast the lower grounds had become so invaded by the mob of ever-increasing spectators that it was more pleasant to adjourn to the shaded strip of lawn with mat shed loges, reserved for the owners, the jockeys and their friends.

Here congregated the diplomats and the prominent personages of Peking. The women displayed gowns that would have scintillated at Longchamps. The chatter was in three tongues, French, English and Italian. They spoke of curiously named races; the Griffin's Scurry, for the young, untried ponies; the Po Yun Kuan, called after a Buddhist temple on the lower road; the Lama Miao. Horses with strange appellations were glibly mentioned, Meiyo Issu, Hsiao Lao Erh.

Jockeys discarding their gay colored silks for conventional riding coats drifted in.

"I told you not to bet on me," commented a jockey-owner whom we had loyally backed, believing only his modesty kept him from admitting he would be a winner. "I couldn't make it with that ten pounds extra weight dragging me down." Yet he had come in just a neck behind.

Another, exhausted, strolled along gloomily. "He's a good horse," murmured this jockey reflectively.

"He *can* run. What he needs is a rider with boots that have spurs all the way up to the knees to make him go."

As the day wore on we learned to discount the horses and their prospects and place our money on the reliable jockeys. "He's the best rider in North China," was a comment that drifted to our ears in the desultory conversation. It proved to be the best tip that the day had offered, a genuine find in the mass of spurious tips.

At the end of the afternoon came the Champion Stakes. No greater excitement could have preceded the Calcutta Sweepstake which nets more than a hundred thousand dollars gold to the lucky winner. This day's biggest race offered nearly four thousand Mex. Solemnly the chances were taken.

For the last time the ponies sped around the track. In a frenzy of enthusiasm the throngs waved and cheered. Bengal, the gray horse, tore past the post, bearing the green and white colors triumphantly to victory!

The tensity which had increased with every instant suddenly shattered. The cohesive force of suspense no longer held together these strange elements of Peking's populace. The crowd, long indifferent to the

ominously massed thunderclouds in the west, scattered like leaves as the storm broke. Each a separate entity now, seeking the shelter his lot afforded, they piled into motors or rickshaws and the rain-lashed road became a seething caldron of hurrying vehicles.

The Gold Fish Pool.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE WESTERN HILLS

When the dragon's breath, the heat of midsummer, scorched the plains we sped to the purple-blue hills that rimmed the horizon.

Here in an old Buddhist monastery we established ourselves—according to the inevitable habit of Pekingites. Banked against the mountain in a thickly wooded grove was a pavilion that had been an Emperor's shrine. Roofed with imperial yellow tiles, it glittered amid the heavy foliage. A path led upwards, the way lined with standards that had held the banners of Emperors when they came to worship.

Now the painted colors of the pavilion were shadowy blue and rose and gold, reminiscent of vanished splendor. Walled on three sides, it was completely open on the fourth facing the valley. There, high above the world, we looked out to the tops of juniper and larch trees that rustled continuously in the faint breeze with a melody like that of a running

stream. We lingered long idle days, deliciously cool above the heat and dust of the city.

Sounds came to us—the braying of an irascible ass; a woodpecker tapping a dead tree branch; the chanted *sutras* of monks at the vesper hour. But for these intrusions, we were alone in this leafy world, watching the sunlight dapple our forest and fade to silver dust.

Below lay a quiet pool with blossoming branches of white locust mirrored in the still water. An arched bridge of marble spanned the translucent beryl expanse. Golden carp stirred in the depths, moving with lazy abandon until a cake crumb startled hundreds whirling in a maelstrom of avid desire.

By the inner court of the temple, alongside a peony-bordered walk, our table was placed. The ubiquitous Boy served dinner to us beneath a great *ginko* tree. This rare species, a hundred feet high, bears leaves with an unmistakable resemblance to the maidenhair fern. We pondered then, dining quietly there, on this sole survivor linked with primeval times, when ferns grew to this towering height and dinosaurs crashed the tendrils with well-directed swishes of a gigantic tail.

Monks in gray passed through the court, half invisible in the twilight, like softly moving shadows.

Sometimes we followed them to the shrine of the Sleeping Buddha. In the farthest temple reposed this recumbent figure of heroic size of the Blessed One, before whom they sang the mass. With a tinkling chime, a bronze gong and a bell of peach wood tapped by a mallet, the recitative of old, feeble voices continued in monotonous, rhythmic syllables.

The service finished, one priest led us to the side of the altar where ex-votos of great shoes had been placed by the pious. He would not explain these strange gifts, but we found our own symbolism. Those who begged repose of Lord Buddha had placed those offerings, imploring his mercy. The great shoes of yellow satin embroidered with the *shou* character of longevity, the crumpled sandals of black paper, equally they seemed to indicate that their donors sought surcease from the resistless round of incarnation. And those black velvet, round-toed slippers covered with the dust of cycles, falling to pieces in the dim recess of the altar space—surely by this time the spirit of the man who offered them has found rest eternal.

Days when we were energetic, we ventured to other temples, for the mountains are clustered with these relics of a period when religion glowed more fervently

in the hearts of the people and Emperors gave lavishly from their plenteous treasures.

The hills were bare, save where these shrines stood in their groves of ilex, chestnut or pine. Always the way led down to the Chihli plain at their feet, through vast fields of green millet, stirred by the wind into ripples of silver. As we journeyed, inevitably there came new surprises. Sepulchers of eunuchs and princes were marked by sculptured pillars. We passed the high round towers from which the Emperors watched their soldiers parade in battle array. We came upon odd, solid piles of masonry that Ch'ien Lung had caused to be erected in imitation of Thibetan models so that his warriors might practice the assault before he undertook the conquest of that country.

The Temple of the Azure Cloud, Pi Yun Ssu, is reputed to be the most exquisite monastery in China. Mounting countless flights of steps, through many courts and shrines, we came to the glorious summit of white marble. Here stood seven dagobas, topped with bronze. It was the dream of a priest from India, this marvelous creation that has endured for ages, causing all beholders to carry away a sense of ineffable beauty.

This temple possesses a Hall of Five Hundred Gods,

Pi Yun Ssu.

copper-tinted deities posed in strange attitudes against the walls. Marco Polo is numbered among them, a great, bearded man with ferociously bushy eyebrows. He seems taller than the other members of the pantheon. The image maker has given him the oval face of the Celestial and the pendulous, heavy ears that are a sign of good luck to the Chinese. But this wanderer who visited so many curious places and recorded things unseen by other men does not appear astonished to be in this company of Lohans. Indeed he plays his rôle with bravado and a certain air of distinction. Perhaps in the night watches when the gods stir to life, he roams under the white-branched cedars to the temple grotto of rocks and trickling water, a phantom who knew nostalgia in his native Venice and who is happy in the land of Cathay where he adventured.

Another day we explored Pa Ta Chu—the Eight Places—where a multiplicity of monasteries are niched on the steep mountain side. Up and down we went to these small but perfect shrines. Impoverished now, many of them have rented courts to city dwellers who come here during the Great Heat. From earliest times this has been a favorite resort. Long before the sea at Peitaho claimed so many residents of Peking

the foreigners had ensconced themselves in this bosky retreat.

Over the first range of mountains lay a monastery where the gilded mummy of an Emperor is enshrined. Legend records that Shun Chih, the first of the Manchus, did not actually die at the time when his official obsequies took place with much pomp, and his infant son acceded to the throne. According to a poet of that day: "He threw away the Empire as one casts away a worn-out shoe; he rejected the sovereignty thrust upon him in this incarnation and, following the example of Lord Buddha, preferred to seek the mystic solitudes." For he loved the Lady Tung and existence held no savor for him when the breath faded from her fair body and her soul passed on. So, it is said, he chose to enter the monastery of T'ien T'ai Ssu, where he abode as a recluse and died many years later in the odor of sanctity.

It must have been our path that Shun Chih traversed seeking his mountain refuge. We made the pilgrimage in palanquins, borne over the incredibly steep pass on the sturdy shoulders of coolies. They climbed where it seemed possible only for the goat boy and his scampering herd to travel. Steeper, steeper grew the route, sheer steps of rock cut in the

mountain side. At the summit we paused, looking back as Shun Chih must have gazed at the kingdoms of the world spread out before him. The fruitful plains, the winding Hun Ho River like a broad, tarnished girdle, the walls and towers of Peking lay there. But the vision did not tempt Shun Chih whose heart was weary. He must have descended into the farther valley meditatively, weighing tranquillity of the soul against the tangible possessions that he relinquished. And when he had crossed the high, camel-backed bridge that flings a challenging loop of stone over the torrent, he knew there was no turning back. Gladly he must have taken the difficult way that led to the sheltered monastery in its peaceful nook, sun-warmed and protected from adverse winds, clinging to the side of a great peak.

He lived in a cave, the story avers. Thrice did his son come to perform the kow-tow to the illustrious ancestor. When at last the Emperor's spirit was released the monks preserved his body in a great earthen jar that can be seen to this day. Finally they robed him in the imperial yellow that was his rightful color and placed him in a small altar space on royal throne cushions, backed by a magnificent screen.

There we found Shun Chih. He sits bending for-

ward slightly, the flesh about his chest ridged by the bending posture. His eyes are but half open, like the dreamy eyes of a god who possesses inner vision and has no need to behold material things. A smile plays on his full lips, the slow contented smile of one who understands all things and is faintly amused by the intricacies of life and death. The saffron cope, mellowed by centuries, falls from his shoulders in long, sweeping lines, undulous, as if he were just about to move. Above the visage that is tinted a gilded bronze, rises his five-pointed crown.

A single incense stick burns before him with a softly mounting plume of smoke. On a small table are placed his cup of tea, his snuff bottle. Piled high in back are paper boxes that hold his various ceremonial crowns. The peasants have thrown copper *cash* in a bowl beside him, asking no doubt the favor of the Son of Heaven for their crops, begging perhaps for blessings on some new-born man-child.

The temple of the Emperor has the pristine freshness of its first days. Among all the faded monasteries like evanescent ghosts, this stands preëminently glowing. For Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang stayed here last winter, when he was slowly pressed westward out of range of the capital and found refuge in this temple

as he evaded Chang Tso-lin. Prodigal of paint and gilt, holding to his theory that his soldiers should practice a trade, he energetically put his forces to work and retouched the buildings to miraculous glory.

Shun Chih, with the wisdom of the ages and the tolerance of a kindly man, watched Marshal Feng come and go. Just so, in his beatitude the Emperor smiles on all who come to visit him in his far hermitage.

Then we, too, departed, leaving Shun Chih to preside with benign dignity over his temple. All the small, bright godlings of the hills we abandoned one day, turning from the sylvan solitude back again to the city. For Peking is not to be denied. Once you have known her power and charm, not even the mountains can stay your longing for the gray, twisting hutungs.

CHAPTER XXXII

WE DRIFT BEYOND THE MOON DOOR

And then to leave . . . the evening breeze caressing the pomegranates and oleanders; the twilight hours when the notes of a long-necked banjo were plucked with the slow, insistent cadence of a throbbing heart.

No longer would we know the shadows of grape leaves in the white moonlight, hanging richly umbrageous as a tropic growth against the latticed windows. But neither would we be precipitated into an altercation with a Chinese virago who appeared one day and wished to dig up our vines and take them away, claiming that an ancestor of hers had planted them in a remote epoch.

No longer would we hear the plaintive music of doves drifting across the sky, nor see the perfect curve of our roof line lilting against the indigo heavens.

We would not know the swift alarms of wars, rumors that swooped low upon us like a flight of malignant bats. Nor would we spend idle hours

strolling on the walls that were such effective protection against looting soldiers intent upon taking their pay from the pockets of civilians—yet walls that we knew would crumble pitiably at the first shot of well-directed artillery, or open their gates treasonably to any war lord who offered silver *sycee*. For the consciousness was ever present that this city which had been captured in a night, might any time again be taken. On occasions awakened early in the morning by distant cannonading, we wondered if it were Feng or Chang—or both. Then drowsily deciding it was only a battalion of Legation guards practicing at their range, we would assume the fatalistic attitude cultivated by every inhabitant of China, and go to sleep again.

Nor would we be startled any more in the night by a fusillade of bricks coming from the sky and landing in our court, shattering a window glass and a porcelain bowl. The servants, when they were routed from their beds, stood in a gibbering circle. They managed to tell us then that the house was built on the site of an ancient temple. Buried deep in the earth was the statue of a revengeful Buddha who had cursed the ground here and would let no one abide in peace. A black, powerful Buddha, who would kill us with the

Lohans Posed against the Walls.

rain of bricks from the sky. . . . And then in the calm light of morning we discovered the score of missiles lying on the pavement had been hurled by no heavenly avenger—but only by a coolie dismissed from service.

Life in these days had given to us the essence of the picturesque, poignant beauty and delightful absurdities.

No more would we know the harassing moment of discovering a cold water faucet had been sold and that each and every one of our dust cloths had been bartered to a dealer in old clothes. Nor would we experience that ecstatic glee that came to us when we learned why our chef napped all day and kept the lights burning throughout the night. For the Manchu cook of the Blue Banner Corps who had replaced the earlier Lo, was writing a book. He had indeed the air of a scholar and a gentleman as his white, tightly bound ankles twinkled across the court of a morning, hurrying for orders. His closely shaven head nodded in perfect understanding. "Savvy," was the laconic reply to the most preposterous demand that we could make. So we hoped the book he was writing on thin paper with neatly ruled vertical lines would be a record of the precious things he knew how to make.

Could he compress into a seven-character poem the recipe for chicken when the bird was served like a peacock rampant and delicately stuffed with the white breast of other fowls, macaroni and truffles? Could he indite permanently in the archives of his clan the everlasting variety of pastries he concocted to surprise us—each one more complex and delectable than the last, until somewhere in the hundreds we lost count of his achievements. The secrets of these should be cherished on fine parchment, written in letters of gold. The name of the cook should be imperishably coupled with the delicacies he created—even though he had the pernicious habit of leaving our appetites but half satisfied and selling the remainder of the day's supply to the hawker of sweets on the corner who did a brisk trade in our luscious pastries at the reduced rate of six coppers a tart.

But Peking days were drawing to a close. We bought trunks of leather, brass bound, with curious twinkling locks to hold all the tangible things we could carry away from China. We gave references to the five house servants—documents containing not too exuberant eulogies of their services. For we had already found places for the staff with acquaintances who vowed to keep them in perpetuity. Therefore

these references for which they had so insistently clamored we surmised would be rented out to other domestics whose reputations were not already established. . . . According to the custom of the country.

For the last time we crowded languid yellow roses into bowls of beaten brass. For the last time we watched the moon swing above the crenellations of the East Wall. . . .

Like the blessed ones in paradise who for a time have tasted of beatific joys and then once more come into the world to take their places on the wheel of life, we journeyed on. Before us sparkled a galaxy of splendid names that we were to know, Borneo, Singapore, Sumatra, Ceylon. . . . Behind us shut the lacquered gates, closing from court to court with an echo of finality. With a lingering glance we passed beyond the Moon Door. . . .

THE END